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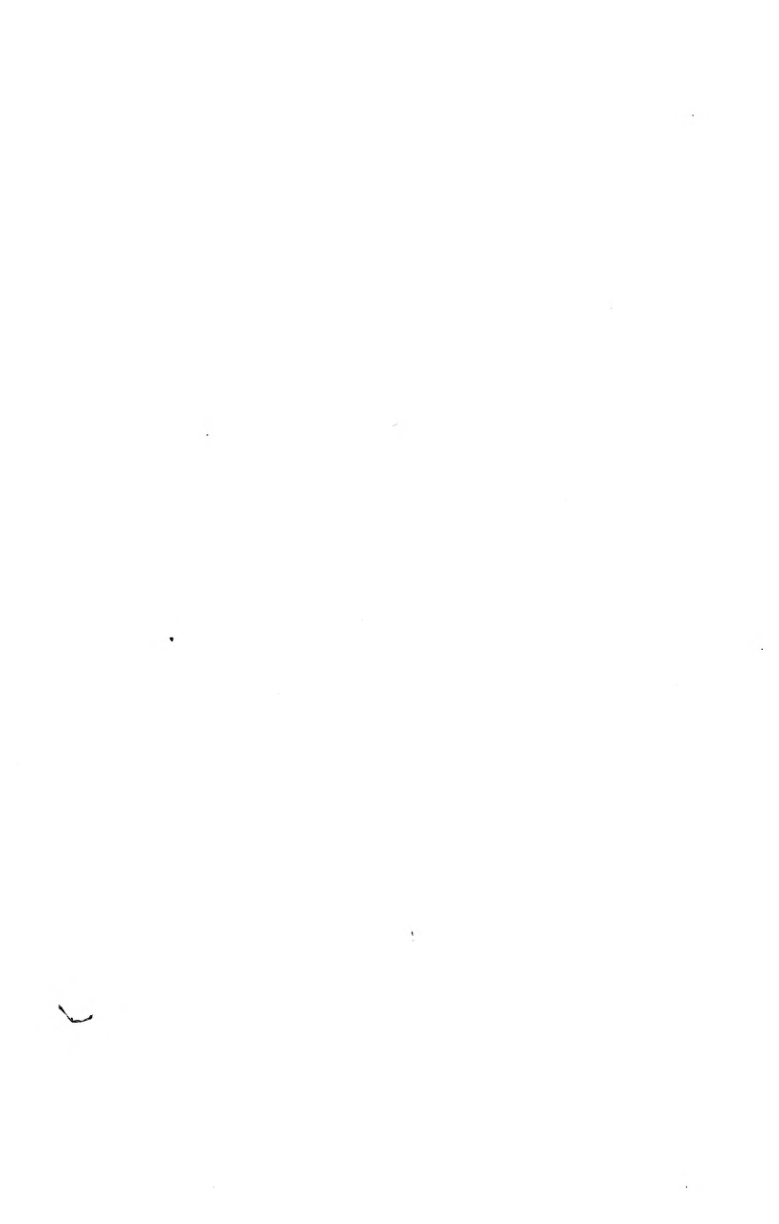
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THE LIGHT ETERNAL



THE LIGHT ETERNAL

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"I.N.R.I. : A PRISONER'S STORY OF THE CROSS," ETC.



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LONDON

T. FISHER UNWIN

ADELPHI TERRACE

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THE LIGHT ETERNAL

BOOK I

20th March 1875.

WHAT a Palm Sunday! The idea of having such a quarrel with his Lordship! My limbs still tremble, but regret? No, I cannot regret what I have said.

It struck me at once that the bishop did not take me into his study, as he usually does. He told me to take a seat in the blue audience chamber. I will now write down what was said—God alone knows what will come of it.

"My dear chaplain," he began, "I am not at all satisfied with you. Do you not remember my fatherly advice? If you cannot be more careful in your writings, throw your pen to the devil and take up your rosary instead. You are compromising the Church and the clergy."

I rose.

"You may remain seated, Wieser," he said, and laid his hand lightly on my arm.

"Your Lordship, it is not seemly that one so heavily charged should remain seated on a silken chair before his judge. May I defend myself?"

“My God, if that were only possible!”

“I am not conscious of having offended against the spirit of Christianity in my writings. Charity, long-suffering, reconciliation”—

“Kindly dispense with these phrases. You must understand that we represent practical Christianity. You must not unite with the new school and join hands with it, as you did recently in one of your articles. And it also seems to me that you allude too often, too intentionally, to the early Christians, to certain customs in the Catholic Church, and to ancient abuses amongst the people. You almost speak like a member of a society for popular education, and sometimes—you must pardon me—your words sound like those of a convinced freemason.”

“Pardon, your Lordship. This accusation would be my deathblow, if it were really applicable to myself. I am a Christian, a Catholic and a priest. I have our religion, our worship, our vocation so much at heart that it is my perpetual desire to see these holy things raised to the purest possible, nay, to ideal heights.”

“And is that why you drag them down?” said the bishop, already book in hand. “You see, I am one of the first purchasers of your new work that appeared yesterday—*Heart-throbs and Hammer-strokes*. Why, there is an unpriestly ring even about the name. Your heart should

throb when at the Mass you elevate the Body of the Lord ; you may deal hammer-strokes to forge firmer yet the chains that bind the arch foe of the Church. Your hammer-strokes seem rather to aim at destroying those chains."

"It is but a harmless story-book," I ventured to remark.

"Well. I do not ask you whether it is now the time for Catholic priests to write harmless story-books. I only doubt whether the anecdotes that you relate are really meant to be harmless. To me, who know your way of thinking, this does not seem very probable. But at all events rest assured that stories like 'The Parson's Pet Dog,' 'The Pious Student,' 'The Fire-Tongs,' are not understood by the people in a harmless sense, but as a means of bringing contempt upon the clergy. The world is quite ready enough to do so of its own accord without the priests themselves affording additional opportunity."

"But, your Lordship, these very stories that you name are old-time anecdotes, kept in the archives at the monasteries, invented probably by cheery monks and told to the people jestingly from those times until now."

"Then why revive them?" asked the bishop.

It now became clear to me that I was but ill defending myself. And why? Because I was not speaking according to my convictions. Was

I to continue such cowardice? I could bear to leave the house in disgrace, but not in self-contempt. I retreated a few steps, as if to indicate that the hour would bring separation. And thus I stood before the fine, white-haired old man.

"My well-beloved master," I began, and it was no mere phrase to me, "I admit that I have written many things with the intention of paving the way for reforms."

"Reforms in the Catholic Church?" he interrupted me. "You wish to undermine with your so-called reforms the Catholic Church, the one institution that stands firm on this changing earth, and is the support of tottering states and nations that have lost their hold?"

"I know that my avowal means destruction, but I cannot do otherwise. I seek the kingdom of God, and in my seeking I am all alone with my doubts and fears. When in confession I admitted my doubt of the moral utility of certain ordinances of Holy Church, I was told—'Pray, my son. Ask God for His mercy, that you may not doubt, but rather that you may submit yourself in humility and obedience to His inscrutable decrees.' And that was all—no one convinced me of my errors, no one encouraged me. References to the Fathers of the Church were not always sufficient. I have remained alone—alone in my seeking and straying. Can you help me,

Bishop? can you dispel my ideas that, for instance, the celibacy of the clergy"—

The bishop raised his eyebrows.

"If I were young myself," I faltered on, "I might suffer under it; I should not speak of it. But a man of my age may perhaps avow the opinion that celibacy cannot always be called a good institution, and that especially in present times any one of you attacking it with pen and word of mouth would do good service to the Church."

Very softly I said it, fearfully, and as it were with a voice full of entreaty that he would forgive my boldness. As he still remained silent, I continued—"Not all our colleagues, your Lordship, that battle with the hard decree, are triumphant, not all, by any means! Hot blood leads to passion, passion to sin, sin to punishment or contempt—and man's sin must be atoned for by the Church. Our times are critical; our position would be a different one but for celibacy; we should be more divine if we would but be more human."

The bishop drew a breath, and it seemed as if he were going to lift some weight from his heart; and yet he said nothing but—"‘Humanity without divine illumination is darkness,’ says Saint Augustine."

"Certainly, your Lordship. Each day shows me more clearly how sinful I am. And yet per-

haps I may humbly hope in all sincerity of heart to be a servant of the eternal light."

"Faith is the eternal light," the prince of the Church replied, calmly and full of dignity. "Pray for such faith, guard it in yourself and in others, and then the light of God will be with you. Faith is one of God's mercies, and we must all pray for it."

"Because we all doubt?"

"It is enough," he interrupted me sharply.

I asked his pardon, and must have stood there in a sorry or bewildered plight, for he rose, came up to me and took me kindly by the hand.

"Wolfgang," he said—and how gently he spoke—"Wolfgang, though you are old, you are but a child. The conflict that you have indicated is not all that disquiets us. It must be borne with resignation. If we rebel, the smallest spirits grow to demons, and kill our souls. Do you doubt that I feel it too? I am convinced that your intentions are good, but you are not made of the stuff that makes reformers. You can only complicate matters. So follow my advice for the future. Do not write such things, but use your talents for the good of our Church. I have always recognised your capacity; you must now give me the opportunity of appreciating it. You surely do not wish to remain a chaplain all your life. The Lord be with you!"

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As I went down the stairs I hardly knew what had happened to me. It seemed to me almost as if the bishop's gentleness had more of the Christian spirit in it than my impatient exertions for reform, which were in truth as void of all humility as if the old institutions were too bad for me, and as if I knew how to improve them.

From the episcopal palace I went straight to the printing-office of the *New Christian News*, in order to cancel the printing of an article that I had sent there on Thursday. For weeks a public dispute had been raging between an educationalist and the clerical press about religious instruction in elementary schools. The educationalist wished the Gospel to have the most prominent place in religious instruction, but the clergy demanded it for the Catechism. And as the dispute raged fiercer and fiercer, I, too, wished to have my say. Under the title, *The Gospel—First*, I wrote an essay in which I maintained that the Gospel does much more for the moral and religious education of man than the Catechism, although, as a people's book, I look upon the latter, too, as necessary. Christ's Gospel in its original and vital form can never be too often or too impressively preached. It is the kernel of our religion. The Catechism is but the husk. This was my verdict after many experiences and considerations. I expected that my bishop would be of the same opinion—it

could not be otherwise. But he disliked the dispute, and for his sake—because he had been so kind to me in spite of his displeasure—I would recall the article. But I reached the printing-office too late; the article was already in print, and would appear next morning. And so it would seem as if I had done it out of spite after to-day's discussion. Is he not my master? Might he not have forbidden me every further stroke of the pen? And, instead, he had nothing but counsel and entreaty. I cannot regret my essay, but I am sorry that in it I must act contrary to the wishes of the old man. That pains me. One may be in the wrong with the best intentions, if one causes suffering to a good man thereby. If one is capable of doing harm with good intention, how much may not an ill-intentioned man commit? I shall have to lie down to sleep with a horrible feeling within me.

Easter Monday.

So I am doomed. In Holy Week everything remained quiet. There was no censure, not an unkind word. But I had no sense of Easter joy. The unspeakable look that the prior blazed at me during the devotional exercises on Wednesday frightened me very much. But the bishop has such a different look, so I suspected nothing bad. But to-day it has happened.

The parish of St Mary's in the Torwald !

They say that it is a beautiful district. They say that one can drink snow-water there in July. The diocesan calendar registers seven hundred and seven souls. Small farmers, herds, wood-cutters and the rest—one does not know what. My predecessor went mad there and died in a lunatic asylum.

There is the decree. I am appointed priest in charge of St Mary's in the Torwald. It is fifteen hundred metres high, so I can hardly say that I have been degraded. St Mary's ! My mother who is dead was called Mary. "Wolfgang," she said one day, "do take everything into account before you make up your mind to be ordained. You can be a lawyer, doctor, teacher or anything else, and in time you can grow accustomed to the profession you have chosen ; but for the priesthood one must be chosen by God. The priest has a heavy responsibility upon him, and he is called to account for it either in the highest heaven or the lowest hell."

I thought that I was one of God's elect. To me nothing seemed more beautiful than to be a priest, to live far from the world only in the service of the good and the divine, free from care, peaceful of soul and honoured of men. As a child I never could think of Heaven but as a great church with its high altar at which Jesus Christ

was reading Mass. For more than twenty years I have now worn the tonsure, and I still seek my ideal. It is not near the mitre, and within the circle of the tiara I have not found it either. Far from the world? In the service of the good and the divine? Peaceful of soul? The highest heaven? The lowest hell? My mother was a clever woman!

And now I will go to seek my heaven—up in the Torwald. Perhaps it will be the one of which the children in Hohenmauth sing—

“It’s cold in the sky,
Snow falls from on high :
If to heaven you’d go,
Take gloves from below.”

10th April.

That, at least, is done. The way of the Cross to Golgotha—forgive me, my Redeemer!—can hardly have been harder than was my visit to the bishop. A visit of thanks it was—to thank him for the living of St Mary’s in the Torwald.

Again he took me into his study, as he so often did in former times, and he spoke kindly to me. He said I was to provide myself with everything necessary for my new station, and particularly with warm clothes. It was a very healthy district, he said, and my predecessors had attained great ages there, with the exception of the unfortunate

Reverend Mr Steinberger, whose mental affliction no one had ever been able to account for. He had been the vicar of St Mary's for nineteen years, and he had been very fond of his little parish. But suddenly something came over him, and he felt that he must leave and wander about the country like one pursued. He gave no reason for it, and probably he had none to give; it seemed almost as if he were a victim of witchcraft. "May God rest his soul!" the bishop concluded, adding that he was sure I would be happy in the cure of souls there, and most sincerely wishing that I too might reach a very great age, like so many of my predecessors.

I do not recollect what I said in reply; it cannot have been anything of importance. Afterwards, when I bade farewell to the venerable old man, I became conscious of the whole extent of my guilt. He accompanied me as far as the door; there he took my hand, quite of his own accord, gave me a look of almost pathetic kindness, and said—"I must say one thing more to you, Wieser. Do not look upon your transfer as a punishment. It is not so. You are now a parish priest and a free man. By this appointment I wished to give you the opportunity of putting into practice in your far-off parish, many of the reforms that you have theoretically demanded as an author here. I do not forbid you to continue

writing about your ideas of reform, but I believe you will, of your own accord, refrain from doing so. Seven hundred souls are committed to your care. May God strengthen and preserve you! Good-bye, Wieser."

Seven hundred souls! In the day of judgment the Lord will call me to account for them.

MONASTERY OF ALPENZELL.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

The wanderer has found a good place of rest. I will employ the remainder of this rest-day in chronicling shortly in my diary the events of the journey to my destination as far as it has proceeded hitherto.

Even now I feel wrathful at the thought of how much I felt the parting from the great town. Why did I feel it so? Have I ever taken any pleasure in those crowded stone dens, filled with their tinsel and their tawdry show? Have I not, rather, always feared those demons that the town dwellers pursue as if they were possessed? Have I ever taken real pleasure in what they call art and expect to take the place of nature for them? In such surroundings have not I myself grown embittered, quarrelsome and perhaps unjust?—And my colleagues, who take their vocation in such a light and business-like way, accepting everything thoughtlessly from the hands of their

superiors. Even from them, it was not easy to part. They seemed to become warm-hearted folk when they shook hands at parting. It is hard to say good-bye, when one is going into banishment. Seven bagpipes would not have held all their good wishes. Only to one shoemaker, whose children I have baptized for these last twenty years, did it, by some miracle occur, that four ducats by way of journey money might prove more serviceable than a thousand good wishes. God reward that shoemaker and send him a priest to baptize his children for the next twenty years!

One of my colleagues did something special to celebrate the parting. He put up his hands to his ears, pointed his fingers upwards and said—"Wieser, if you had not been this, you might have become this." First he indicated donkey's ears with his fingers and then a bishop's mitre. "They were fond of you," he added, "and were only waiting for your conversion. But you put it off too long, and now they have given you a living by way of a death-blow."

On the first day the train bore me swiftly along. Amid the noise of stations and the roar of wheels there is little time for heartache. They are cradles in which grown-up children may be hushed to sleep.

But out on the plain the corn is already in the ear and the fruit-trees are in blossom. Five hours

in the mail-coach yesterday brought us to this hospitable house. The district through which we drove reminded me forcibly of the valleys of my home. The green mountains there showed almost the same undulating outline ; the treeless villages with their dove-grey wooden roofs were almost the same ; so too the stately farm-buildings enclosing squares. Only the churches have pointed spires here, while in my home they rear their great red onion-shaped steeples on high. Strangers do not think them beautiful. Everything is beautiful that is part of home and our youth.

Dear old Hohenmauth ! where even the castle had onion-shaped towers, and one at every corner, too. At home, in the gardener's cottage we had onions in our bread-soup, and if our mother's eyes were sometimes dim, she would say that she had been grating onions. My father was so-called head gardener to the prince ; but there was nothing princelike in our house with its two rooms, of which one was the kitchen. In my time, half a dozen children were always crawling and climbing about in them. I was also allowed to climb about in the royal garden, and sometimes I even crept into the castle. The young princes had raised me to the rank of their playfellow. If they wanted to climb a tree for a bird's nest, it was I who put up the ladder ; if they wanted to shoot, I bent their

bows, and when they went down the mountain-slope on small sledges, I dragged their sledges up again for them. The young gentlemen were not at all inventive ; they only knew how to deal with ready-made toys. So I made toys for them of my own invention, thought out amusements and jokes, and was often the leader of a whole band of little princes, counts and barons, who had come over from the neighbouring castles. Once when the master and mistress were out, we triumphantly invaded the castle and entered the halls and rooms, which were as beautiful as any church. We were playing at being Crusaders. We also reached the chamber belonging to the lady of the castle. It was hung with blue silk, and had very thick carpets, so thick that my feet sank in up to my ankles. All the woodwork was inlaid with gold and ivory ; it was wondrous to behold. I was the military chaplain in the crusade, sprang on to a marble table with its sweet-smelling phials and boxes of ointment, and amidst the acclamations of the knighthood I began to deliver a ~~ser~~mon. It chanced that the subject, "Thou shalt not steal," had occurred to me, and I held forth cheerily to the young noblemen. But in the midst of it we were surprised by the princess in person, and when she found out that the gardener's "Wolfel" could preach so well, it occurred to her to open her purse full wide and let the boy study for the

priesthood. My parents were well content, and so was I, if only for the sake of the holidays, in which I was subsequently almost on an equal footing with the princes at the castle of Hohenmauth.

Where are those happy times now? Here in the monastery of Alpenzell they certainly are not. Here amongst the well-fed monks I am the poor priest of St Mary's in the Torwald. Of course they received the former chaplain of the town priory with due respect, and in the library I saw all my books—but they were uncut.

To-morrow I am to go on,—on a monastery cart, I hope—in God's name, up to the Torwald!

Monday Evening.

I am still in the monastery. My things have not yet arrived, so the monks have asked me to stay on, and have even for my sake, I believe, arranged all kinds of entertainments.

In times past this fine monastery was full of priests who glorified God by appreciating His beautiful world. To-day there are only eight clergy who take charge of this vast domain as well as farms and a seminary.

The abbot sets me thinking. He is a tall blunt man with a face tanned by the weather. His thick hair is cut short; it is beginning to grow grey. Behind his bushy brows there are

two small scowling eyes ; his grey whiskers extend from his ears downwards ; otherwise he is carefully shaved, so that one can see all the sharp lines round his broad, tightly-shut mouth. His is one of those faces that cannot laugh. Years ago I had to spend the last night on earth with one who was condemned to die. I was less afraid of the poor sinner than of the gloomy warder who was watching us. And that warder looked something like the very reverend abbot of Alpenzell. He has occasionally shown me round the monastery, has explained things to me, and asked me questions, and has urged me to have all my wishes gratified during my stay in the house, but all this very curtly and gravely. When we passed the kitchen, he said to the women who were engaged in cooking there—"I politely request the company of the capon that arrived on pilgrimage a few days ago, at dinner to-day." "All right," they answered, laughing. He made a very fierce grimace and went on. I began to wonder whether this terrifying seriousness was always to be trusted.

At dinner I had to sit at his right hand. He carved and was silent. When the golden sparkling table wine fired our blood, tongues began to wag freely in spite of the severe look of the superior. They had been speaking of the Pope, Pius the Ninth, whose life-size portrait hung on

the wall, when a round-faced brother suddenly began to trill the song of "The Pope and the Sultan"—"The Pope lives grandly in this world." But each time an ever-recurring procession of tankards and dishes—the capon that had been so politely invited had also appeared—interrupted the song.

But in the meantime they began to tell stories between the courses. They told the story of the country clergyman who would not let the procession that was praying for rain halt until the barometer began to fall. And they told the story of the preacher who took Jesus as an example of childish disobedience because He ran away from His mother when He was twelve years old, and came to a bad end on the cross in consequence. After every fresh story there was a peal of laughter. Suddenly the abbot cleared his throat and looked sharply round. Now it's coming, I thought, he will storm at those priestly anecdotes in a slightly different way from my good bishop. The abbot raised his bushy brows a few times and wrinkled his forehead and then began to speak. He told the story of the fire-tongs, which a student had managed to secrete in the canon's bed, and which was looked for in vain throughout the parsonage for a whole week by the canon and the housekeeper.

Shrieks of laughter followed, only the abbot sat silent again, and put on a reproachful air,

while a few dimples in his cheek twitched and revealed the rogue. I almost think my worthy host is preferable to the prison warder after all.

After the meal had lasted for about two hours, the abbot rose to his full height and made the sign of the cross over head and breast. Everyone did the same and prayed in silence. The cross of Christ and Pius on the wall were not quieter than the monks were now. The refectory, which had echoed with pealing laughter, had now become a chapel.

After dinner, several of the men went out with their guns. The rest invited me to play a game of bowls with them, but I preferred to wander about in the extensive monastery.

"The fellow with the money-chest is to go with him," ordered the abbot, in obedience to which a priest approached, who had a goitre. He is the treasurer, and they call him, "the fellow with the money-chest" because of his excrescence. He was a very cheerful person, and in spite of his short-windedness, he told me a good deal about my future home, but not very much that was encouraging. He told me that a former vicar had been parson, blacksmith and tailor all in one. The people of the Torwald, he said, were hard-skulled to the ninth degree, and did I know where the greatest buttonhole in the world was? The door of St Mary's church in the Torwald was the greatest

buttonhole in the world, he then explained, for the greatest button-headed fools passed in and out.

Thus the man with the money-chest chatted on and on, until he went to join the players, for I was glad to stroll alone through the buildings and think. Hard-skulled to the ninth degree ! And as I do not possess the tenth, all my efforts will be vain. There will not be much to gain by hardness up there.

Afterwards I went to look at the monastery church more in detail than I had done the day before. It stands in the midst of all the buildings, on a large square, almost open space, touching the monastery only on the altar side. It is built in Gothic style, only the giant cupola of bright green that glistens like mother-of-pearl seems to be a recent addition, made, perhaps, by some abbot who could not get the cupola at St Peter's, Rome, out of his mind. The church at Alpenzell is larger than our episcopal cathedral. There is no lack of marble and rich structural ornamentation in this house of God. To the left of the high altar, at the head of three marble steps, between four pillars that glisten like ivory, under a heavy red silk baldachino stands the abbot's throne, richly inlaid with gold and precious stones that frame the red velvet. Above it the bishop's staff and mitre and the cross.

Then I went on to the library. I found a hundred thousand tomes of human wisdom in this world-

forgotten place, which is only inhabited by peasants and a few priests, who would rather brush the dust off their boots than off their books. They play bowls, hunt, shoot at targets, cut timber, cultivate the soil. And I am not surprised at it ; experience is the most thorough of the sciences ; life itself is the most beautiful of poems. The real history of the world is lived by each active man, even if he only fells a tree, guides the plough or plays his fiddle for a dance.

In the library I also saw fastened to the pillars the pictures of those neighbouring districts that once belonged to the monastery or were founded by it. So, too, the parish of St Mary's in the Torwald. May God have mercy on it !

As I wandered through the long cloisters I came to a room that at first sight looked like a natural history museum. It contained stuffed birds, snakes, forest beasts, beetles, as well as stones and dried plants arranged in order. It was one of the lecture-rooms of the seminary. There was no instruction to-day. The young men were said to be hunting up and down the woods in order to find woodruff for the flavoured wine the abbot likes so much. I suppose there was none to be found, for nothing of the kind appeared later on at the evening meal.

From the monastery I walked forth between the high elms, poplars and flowering apple-trees of the

garden, which, without having a distinct boundary, loses itself gradually in field and woodland. In a glen there was a pond with bathing-huts and worn-off stone figures, but without the conventional swan. I met a bare-footed woman who was carrying eggs in a flat basket. As she was walking along, she was busily knitting a stocking, and at the same time she was looking for fresh flowers on the grass. I have been learning for fifteen years, but I cannot do what she does—walk and carry and knit and look for flowers all at once! And who knows what her mind was doing all the time. When she saw me, she put her basket on the ground and kissed my hand. I suffered it willingly. It was an honour that the canon rarely enjoys, though the village priest does so every day. To be revered a little, and perhaps even loved by my parishioners—that is one of my weaknesses.

“Are you taking the eggs up to the monastery?” I said, to give her a kind word in return for the kiss, “I suppose they pay you well for them up there?”

“Well the abbot does not take them for nothing,” she replied.

“I suppose not.”

“Yes,” she said, “but he does not give things for nothing either.”

“I suppose the very reverend abbot is a severe master.”

“He!—and severe?” she laughed.

“But he looks so gloomy. Why, he never laughs.”

“That is why others can laugh all the more—when he is there. He is a good master.”

“Even if he won’t give anything for nothing?” I asked.

“He knows the reason why,” answered the woman. “He does not want to make beggars of people. Yes, that is so. Whoever wants anything from him has to do something in return. Our reverend master will not give alms, even if the Christian doctrine tells him to do so ten times over. If a poor man comes to him, he gives him something, but he has to split wood in return; and if he cannot do that because there is none to split, he has to carry wood. And if he cannot do that because he is lame, he has to sing his Reverence a song; and if he can’t do that because he has no voice, he has to say an Our Father to him, or the Creed; and if he can’t do even that, why then he gets nothing. But I am wasting time in gossip. Good-day, Father.”

She put her basket on her head, started her knitting afresh and walked towards the monastery. That was no bad account that I have just received of you, abbot.

In the evening, when we were all assembled in the refectory, the fathers loudly and importantly

discussed their luck and bad fortune at bowls, and in low Latin their adventures in the wood.

Suddenly the door opened and a man entered who seemed quite out of place. A blue apron was tied round his waist ; in his horny hand he carried a whip, and on his head he wore a high felt hat, from under which dangled the coloured tassel of a cap. He stood still, and then, snorting through his yellow moustache, asked whether the new vicar was already there. When he became aware of the abbot amongst the clergy, his hand went slowly up to his hat, but he left his cap on. That he probably only takes off to the Pope. Then he told us that he was the carrier, whom the people in the Torwald had sent to meet me.

"I have come with two oxen and a cart," he said to me quite simply when I had been introduced to him. The abbot may have noticed my surprise at such a conveyance. "Two oxen and a cart," he muttered. "It's all right."

My things have also arrived, so now we can go to sleep, old Wolfgang. To-morrow, it will be under a different roof.

ST MARY'S IN THE TORWALD,
Tuesday, 27th April—Evening.

I feel like anything rather than writing. I feel heart-throbs, and if the hammer-strokes of Providence are yet to come, I myself shall be an illus-

tration of my newest book. But it has been an important day for me. I must write down its events.

At six o'clock I read my Mass in the monastery church at Alpenzell, and as I did so, my poor soul felt slightly more at ease ; but the hot tea afterwards gave me real courage. Then I wanted to say farewell, but the abbot would not hear of it. "You'll be coming down to us, neighbour," he cried. "Not everything grows up there in the Torwald. Above all, you must get four more legs."

The carrier was kissing his hand. "Yes, that's all right," said the prelate, seizing him by the hair, "you see that he gets home in safety, and tell Kimpel, the blacksmith, to forge a strong chain for your priest, so that he cannot run off."

Three boxes, one large basket and a forest priest, all went perfectly well on to the waggon. The two black speckled oxen were drawing it slowly but with determination ; the driver Leopold walked by the side with bent knees and large strides, and from time to time reminded the animals of their duty by a good-natured "Hi !" or a light flick of his whip. The two clumsy wheels rumbled. The lantern, in which a tallow candle stuck, had been fastened to one of the rungs of the ladder frame. I could not quite understand why we had a lantern. Surely we should reach

St Mary's before night. The forest mountains, in whose midst a grey rock towered here and there, were gleaming red in the morning sunlight, and the shady hollows poured down a cool stream of air and sweet scent upon me. I felt almost childishly fresh—but don't grow presumptuous, Wolfgang. You are but a very, very poor man.

After a time, when we had passed the little village of St John, the road grew more rugged, and the mountains more compact. One of them, on the right, fell in the form of a bare rocky wall that looked as if it were hanging over and would fall. Close to the water the road passed on into a gorge that grew so narrow and so sharp in its turnings, that I several times believed the man had mistaken the way and that we could not continue thus. The air was icy cold as it came out, and sometimes the dripping walls high above the path almost touched overhead. I thought of the lantern, but Leopold did not light it. He was walking on in front, leading one of the oxen by the horn, and he heard nothing, however much I called and asked him wherever he was leading me—the water made so much noise. At the very narrowest place where the path crosses the brook, there is a statue of the Virgin in a rift of the rock. The more insignificant the art, the greater the faith. If that is true, I shall find a very pious population in this district.

At last the way grew clear again. As we were driving over a little woodside meadow, I said to the driver, "That was horrible."

"Yes," he replied, "that is called the 'Cold Gate,' and so far the road has been fairly good. If we had only passed over the Riedel and through the Lucken."

I soon understood what he meant. The road began to grow steep and stony. At times it was not a road at all, but merely a rut down which muddy water was trickling. It was snow-water. But I noticed nothing peculiar. The slopes were almost bare of trees, but they were green or stony and lit up by the sun. The road had to turn and twist in order to wind its way up. But as even the turning and twisting was not of much avail, it finally made straight for the summit, up the bed of the brook. Leopold let the oxen rest frequently, and pushed a stone underneath the waggon. Two oxen and a cart, that was all right, the abbot had said. Well, the bishop had done something towards providing a new pastor for the people of the Torwald, but the two oxen were doing most.

After a drive of more than three hours, we reached the ridge that was called the Riedel. There stood a splintered boundary-stone, which is said to have been struck by lightning, and a deserted hut. The broad mountain pasture-lands

extended there, but they were still brown and bare, and the hollows were full of snow. I had got out at the steep slope, and now stood still and looked back towards the blue distance from which I had come. Below me lay the cleft rocks of the "Cold Gate," and out in the broad valley lay the monastery with its green shimmering dome. Farther off lay the softly undulating hills, and on the far horizon the scarcely visible thread of a mountain ridge, behind which the plain begins. And everything was so summery and so sunny, I hearkened out into the world. There was nothing to be heard of the mad pulsing of life and its conflict. On a young green larch a little finch was singing the song that it sang at my cradle.

After the driver had fed his horned horses with a truss of hay, on which I had been sitting, and after these horses with their clumsy snouts had half emptied the wayside trough that stood by the well, we dragged on again. I had taken my cloak out of the basket, had put it on, and was now walking behind the rumbling cart. But I kept at some distance, for Leopold seemed to think it his duty to flavour the mountain air with strong tobacco, but I preferred it unflavoured. Or did he wish to warm his nose? The air was bitingly cold. The landscape had changed. Our narrow and even slanting road was gradually

going downwards by the side of a very steep mountain ridge. From time to time Leopold put his hollow hands to his mouth and called : "Hoi ho !" At first I thought it was on account of the echo, but there was a different reason for it. Over the mountain-slope another, and a strange voice responded—"Hoi ho !" Then Leopold let his cart stand still, gave the oxen a couple of blows on the forehead with the handle of his whip, to make them go back with the cart pace by pace until they came to a slightly wider place. Another team of oxen were coming to meet us. Two two-wheeled axles had been connected by means of a long pole, and were covered with long, newly-sawn planks. How were these two vehicles to pass each other on this narrow, slanting path? It was impossible. It was equally impossible to turn back. I seemed to be brought face to face with a fatal accident !

The two drivers let their oxen stand perfectly still, went to our cart, took off a few boxes and lifted it up on to the slope where it hung as it were threatening every moment to topple over and to fall into the abyss. The oxen, too, were pressed close up to the mountain, where they stood like blocks of stone, seeming to recognise the danger. Then the other carrier went to his vehicle and began to advance slowly, while Leopold leant closely up against the planks on

the mountain-side. One of the wheels seemed suspended in mid-air. I dared not breathe. At last they were free of each other. The boxes were piled on again and the two carts rumbled on, each in its own direction. Neither of them lay shattered in the abyss, the men had not even taken their pipes out of their mouths. Leopold says that such things occur every day.

When we had passed the slope, the cart made straight for a perpendicular cracked wall, and there it stopped. Leopold whistled to me to get in and he lighted the lantern. By my watch it was a minute past midday. He led the oxen by the horns straight up to the wall. It gradually seemed to open in a densely-wooded crack, and suddenly a cave-like hole appeared. Lazily and slowly the cart rumbled in, as if it were nothing out of the common. Then we drove on for about ten minutes underground, once up, then down and then straight on, through wide hall-like hollows, and then through narrow slits in which my shoulder touched the stone. The lantern lit up the black cracked walls with a quivering ghostly light. Leopold told me that this hollow pass was called the "Wurmlucken."

But at last we got out on to the other side and the sight was wonderful. A winter landscape lay before me — a broad highland valley full of snow. Only the forests formed dark masses as

they lay. From a distance one could recognise single groups of houses and even separate villages. Dark lines between indicated roads, thickets, and boundary fences, and in their midst a winding river that glistened in places. High mountains all around. After the gloomy cave track this free wide fair landscape! At some distance, on a steep and wooded hill, rose the slender spire of a church.

"There," said Leopold, "you can catch a glimpse of it now."

It was so. That was the district that they call the Torwald.

I have never in my life had such a strange sensation as in the hour when I first beheld this valley.

The driver filled a fresh pipe. Here as elsewhere, I suppose, they smoke when they start out or arrive. Such customs go through the whole world. Leopold also became talkative. I asked whether there were no other approach to the Torwald valley except by way of the mountain and the cave.

"Hardly," was his answer. "You cannot get across from the other side over the snow mountains, that is a sure thing. The ice-wind is a bit cutting, eh, Father? I expect Regina will have lit the stove."

"And who is Regina?"

"Regina, that's your"—

"What do you say?"

"Your housekeeper. She used to be with the old gentleman too. Gee up! you too, you'll be in your stable soon."

Next we came to open country, and to a village comprising about twenty stately farms.

"That is Unterschuttbach," said Leopold. "Then we have to go through Oberschuttbach, that's another hour on, where the walls begin."

"And St Mary's?"

"St Mary's is in the middle, that's over there, where the church is on the hill, and where we are at home. It isn't as fine as down in the monastery at Alpenzell, eh, Father?"

The people whom we met on the way, or found standing in front of their houses behaved very reverently. The men took off their hats, and the women and children came to kiss my hand. They were strong, healthy people. After the village we came through fields and pasture-land, then to another forest of gnarled and aged pines.

I walked after the cart on foot, with my stick that must now be a shepherd's crook. When we had passed through the forest, the hill with the church was straight in front of us. Leopold pulled out his red handkerchief and waved it high in air. At the same moment the bells began to ring—a clear, true peal.

Slightly raised between the wooded hill with its church and the mountain-slope, stood several houses. In front of the village inn, the heads of the parish stood in holiday attire, although it was a work day. They greeted me with a few clumsy words, and said they had been waiting for me. Then the foreman, a tall and very serious man, led me through the village street up to the rectory. It is a cheery building with its white walls and bright windows. In front there is a garden, and at the back a gently sloping hill. Little fir trees stand on either side of the entrance steps. As I went in, the bells stopped, but a chubby little woman, who was standing in the doorway and stretching out both hands to me, began—"And are you not half-frozen, Father? God be thanked and praised that you have really come. Come straight into your room."

She made me feel quite at home, as if I had known her for thirty years. Her face is wrinkled, she has clever and lively little eyes, she wears a grey silk cap with black strings, and she has a very tiny moustache. That is Regina.

A staircase that is almost broad leads up to the first storey where my rooms are. I have two; they are large and light and have two windows each, through which I can look out into the world to east and south. I went to those windows first of all. The view of earth and sky,

as seen from the windows of their home, means so much for many folks. I require a great deal of sky. Only the fewest realise how beautiful heaven is — even on earth. The rooms are warmed. It is pleasant so, although it is near the end of April. On the brown polished furniture there is not a speck of dust. The floors are so cleanly scrubbed that one might knead dough upon them. The window curtains are of snow-white linen, and are even edged with lace. Several prints of Christian subjects hang on the walls, and a Black Forest clock with a brown face ticks loudly and solemnly in its old and artistically carved case. In a quiet room one ought to hear the heart-beat of time, otherwise one so easily believes that time is dead. On the prayer-desk stands a black crucifix with an ivory figure of Christ. It is a work of great and simple art.

I had believed I should find the vicarage almost bare, and now I find everything I require, and even more. There is even a well-appointed book-case almost full.

Regina must have noticed my surprise. "All that belongs to the pastor of St Mary's. It belonged to the old gentleman, and he gave it over to the vicarage when he was lying very ill in hospital. And now I am really quite hurt that you are quite forgetting dinner. It is almost

late enough for nobles to dine. But we are not nobles, and we feel hungry at twelve o'clock."

On the daintily set table the soup was already steaming, and a small bottle of gold gleaming wine lit up the old-fashioned crockery. They still use horn spoons, which are somewhat broad, but with the tasty pea-soup I managed quite well. Then came a joint and turnips, and a cream pudding with raisins. I looked Regina full in the face once : it seemed to me as if she must be my mother ! How else should she know my favourite dishes and prepare them so well ? I felt like I used to do twenty years ago when I came home for the holidays.

Meanwhile my things had been carried in, but I left them in order to go and see the church first, for I was told that Karl the sacristan was already up there with the keys. As I walked up the hill between the old pine-trees, I felt a little bit afraid. From the outside the church was beautiful and even stately on its wooded height with its three circular naves and its slender shingle-roofed spire. But I have seen village churches that have made me wish to be an iconoclast !

The church clock chimed the hour clearly and rapidly. I shall hear that sound from now until my last day. The winding footpath is smooth and dry. Tiny herbs grow along the edge amongst the snow. I am pleased that no grass

grows on the path that leads to the church of St Mary. Half-way up amongst the old trees and the fresh underwood there is an open space with a few seats. A picture of St Joseph in a wooden case hangs on the trunk of a tall, weather-beaten pine. It is a restful place in the midst of the wood. A few moments later I reached the top. At first I caught sight of the sacristan's house. It is made of wood and bears the inscription : "Karl Gross, Tailor." One more turning round the group of trees, and I am facing the church. It stands on the ridge of the hill, which is connected with the mountain by a narrow strip of land. On this strip is the verger's house and a few other huts. The church is surrounded by a thick wall as if it were a citadel. The churchyard is within the wall. Above the entrance gate the words are written : "May the Light Eternal shine upon them!" A few ill-kept wooden crosses are fixed to the wall. I have always heard that true Christians give little heed to the care of graves. They look after the soul, not after the body.

Karl was already standing at the gate of the church with his bunch of keys. He was a thin, active little man with a typical verger's face. He was dressed in festive black and all about him, from his boots to his white tie, was very neat. He bowed to me most ceremoniously : "So you

are Karl," I said. "Now unlock, in the name of God."

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All is well.

The church of St Mary is more pleasing and harmonious than almost all others I have seen. The strong odour of incense reminded me of the old church at Hohenmauth. Large town churches have not the same. The church here is built in the form of a cross. It has light semicircular naves, eight large windows with round arches, and between them half-projecting imitation pillars like those of St Peter's. The walls are dry, whitewashed and carefully preserved. It has three altars, quaint in shape, heavily gilt, and gleaming like marble and alabaster. The pulpit, too, is light in colouring ; so also are the font, the confessional and the choir with its by no means small organ. The seats are of pine and the floors of larch wood. Everywhere there is a cheerful white light. The pictures are not such as one would call masterpieces, but they are pleasing in their bright colours, and faith transfigures them. The artist creates the picture, but he who prays before it supplies the divine element.

The high altar is decorated with snow-white angel figures. It has twelve silver candlesticks which a rich peasant is said to have given in the hour of his death. The Tabernacle is richly gilt,

and represents the Last Supper. An oil-painting hangs above the high altar. The subject: a young and beautiful woman advancing straight towards us, walking under palms and pine-trees. Her right hand leads a little boy who bears a cross upon his shoulder. His large round eyes show forth his heavenly innocence, and he looks kindly at us. It is Mary with the child Jesus. At the side altars are pictures of Mary's parents—Joachim and Anna.

Then Karl opened his mouth and said: "All the family are together, except the husband. That used to vex the old pastor, and that is why he dedicated a picture to St Joseph out in the greenwood."

One can see that this church has once belonged to a wealthy monastery that rejoiced in God and in the world. Everywhere there are happy angel heads. There is a glass chandelier in which the sun-rays are reflected. And before the high altar hangs a silver heart in which is kept the red glass with the everlasting light. Karl with his long arm pulled down the heart, to see whether it contained sufficient oil. The little wick swims on the surface of the oil, and it is so tender that every breath might blow it out, and yet it is to burn day and night until the judgment day. It almost seemed to remind me of it, as it quivered slightly. How mysteriously divine is fire!

On both sides of the high altar there are two small cherry-red sacramental banners, and then two large banners of white and green silk, and a white canopy with heavy gold borders. Above the font, on which there is a delicately carved figure of St John the Baptist, there is a life-sized figure of Christ crucified, in whose features mortal agony and submission have found sublime expression. Opposite the font, where in other churches the black banner of death is generally placed, there is a brightly-coloured picture of the risen Saviour. There are not many pictures of the Passion, but everywhere representations of happy legends of radiant and triumphant Christianity, so that this church seems truly to symbolise the victorious kingdom of God. Filled with joy to the very depths of my soul, I knelt down before the Holiest of Holies. Aged priest-soul, do you not feel that you are in heaven?

Afterwards I stood beside the churchyard wall, and looked out into the valley on every side. At the foot of the "Kirchenriegel," as they call the hill on which the church stands, is the peaceful little village of St Mary's with its few houses. The rectory is the prettiest of them, and the inn the largest. The schoolhouse stands in the midst of an orchard. All that is my domain. Farther away the ice and stone mountains begin. The view of them from the church is indescribable.

Then I went down. The floor was being scrubbed in the rectory entrance hall, and the boards were steaming. Two maids were scouring them with wisps of straw as hard as they could, and yet they had been so bright already. Perhaps there is a mania for scrubbing in this house ; it often happens so when several women are together. But the reason was really as follows—An ink bottle had broken in one of my boxes, had flooded many a learned treatise on divinity inside with its black stream, and had then gone through the crevices on to the floor. A sure sign that I am to leave book-reading and writing alone in St Mary's. The country and the people form a book in themselves. Shall I be able to give it up? Have I not tried often enough to break myself off it? And when I had put everything away, did not my very blood turn to ink, so black and bitter that I did not feel happy again until I had worked it off in writing. You shall not write, I vowed, and to be sure of myself, I registered the vow in—writing. No, I must keep that one thing only. I must put my personal experiences, my views and states of mind on to paper, into a secret diary. I have no one else in the wide world, so I will at least have myself, and will entrust my innermost feelings to these pages. I will talk to myself by means of them, so that I may retain the day's impressions, and may pre-

serve a single-minded chronicle of my passing life and activity at St Mary's.

On this same day I have unpacked my things and arranged them in my cupboards. Even my secret box, that hardly need be kept secret now. During my first student years, I had a very favourable room in a baker's house. It was situated behind the baking oven, and at night a lantern shone in at the window. What I saved in light and firing that time, I spent in buying three unrighteous books. They were Gessner's *Idylls*, Rousseau's *Emil* and Goethe's *Hermann*. I smuggled these forbidden treasures through the whole of my stay at the seminary. I have read all the life out of these books. Now they lie there like dried-up mummies.

At first I did not want to touch my poor predecessor's possessions, but they thrust themselves upon me. The snuff-box lying on the old folios kept tempting me, until I took a pinch. But it had no effect. It was stale. It must have been more than a year ago since the poor old sick gentleman took his last pinch. To-day, also, I have paid a visit to the head of the parish. I had seen him a short while before, but would hardly have recognised him in his apron and tucked-up shirt-sleeves. He is the village blacksmith, Simon Eschgartner by name, but commonly known as Kimpel the smith. He is a strong muscular man,

and seems to be of considerable account in the village. He was just in the act of fastening the hoops on to an old cask. At my appearance he shifted his small cap slightly from one side of his head to the other, but there were no further formalities, for he was at work. But his boy, who was holding a piece of iron into the blue gleaming forge with a long pair of tongs, looked at me all the more kindly. I have not often seen such a beautiful, soft, gazelle-like gaze. For a little while I sat on the axle of a plough that was apparently waiting to be repaired. I watched them both at their work, and felt quite at home. I like folks at work almost as well as at prayer. I am impressed by the seriousness, strength and success of the former, and by the humility of the latter.

At last I rose, feeling somewhat ashamed of my smooth fine town coat before these workers.

The smith leaned his hammer against the anvil, and asked me a few questions. Then he touched my taffeta sleeve once or twice and said, "If your inner covering is not tougher than your outer one, the Torwald wind will soon cut through."

I understood him well enough. Time alone can make reply.

I have slept but little during this first night. Again and again I thought of my good fortune, and of God's unexpected mercy.

How long ago it is since the day when I, a young man of scarce twenty-five, sat for the first time in the confessional. An old man of eighty was kneeling before me, and was entrusting to me, a mere youth, the sorrow and burden of his life. He desired counsel and consolation from me, and how ashamed I felt. I forced myself to remember that I stood in God's stead, and yet what could I offer to the man but the advice of a fellow-sinner? How much dualism lies between that time and the present! But I think all that is done with now. Here amid the mountains, Wolfgang, you may commit to God that which is God's, and may yourself work out that which is man's. Here is your continuing city. Have you not found in St Mary's what you have so often dreamt of?

After a short spell of sleep I awoke towards morning with a strange sense of oppression. I opened a window that I might breathe more freely. A soft breeze was rustling through the trees.

I do not think I have ever offered the sacrifice of the Mass with greater devotion than I did on that first morning at my church. And I made a vow that I would forget all that has worried and distracted me, all questions of doctrine, dispute, sophistry and politics. The world with its conflicts had led me into them, but they are not

really in my nature. Here, amongst natural people, I will be natural too. I will help these poor people to beautify their spiritual life. It shall be my task to raise them and prepare them for eternity.

All the seats were occupied. The whole congregation seemed to be present, although it is a work day. Next Sunday I will deliver my inaugural sermon; it will bring us into closer touch with each other. I was very surprised at the way the organ was played. The schoolmaster, who had played it, introduced himself to me after the Mass. His name is Michael Kornstock. He is an elderly man with a high-pointed forehead and long hair that curls down to his shoulders. His hair is almost grey, and his long grey beard ends in two points that fall on to his chest. He has short legs and a slight hump. His thin neck protrudes. He is always restless in gesture, hasty of movement, and quick of speech in which he seems anxious to utter all his thoughts at once. Out of sheer embarrassment he almost fell on his knees, and his very politeness made him so rude that he grudged me every word, interrupted me whenever I began to speak, and laid bare to me his whole heart, which had evidently been full to overflowing for I know not how long. He is entirely filled with the idea of music. He composes oratorios, operas, requiems, and in fact

everything that has music in it. He hopes for the future. He has sent many of his works to conductors, theatrical managers and musicians. Some have written to him telling him that his works are very good, very excellent and very admirable, but exceedingly difficult to perform—in fact beyond their powers—for which reason they return the compositions. He is still waiting for answers from others, and has been waiting for them for some years. In the meantime he is employing his art in St Mary's, teaching some of the more gifted children to sing, to play the violin and wind instruments, and on festivals he even performs some of his works. So far, he has not done much travelling, he says. He has been trained at Alpenzell and has been choirmaster there for some years. But when a clerical brother gained possession of the choir by fair means and foul he went on to St Mary's, though he only looked upon it as a stage in his career. It was rather a lengthy stage, he was forced to admit, but what was worth working for was worth waiting for. In time people would be forced to pay more heed to him than they usually do to a village schoolmaster.

Then he immediately asked a favour of me. If ever I was kind enough to converse with him, he said, I was to be sure to speak very distinctly. For he had the same infirmity as the immortal

Beethoven, who was slightly hard of hearing. But it was not very bad, only it seemed as if people had a habit of saying just the most important things very softly. And he added that he would rather thresh straw the whole day for a peasant than listen to those mutterers and mumblers and whisperers, whose words he for the most part failed to understand, however much he tried. He was not one of those who don't wish to hear, but he only wished to appeal to my kindness in this matter. He said the old gentleman—meaning my predecessor—had not always spoken loudly by any means, but always distinctly and slowly, so that he had been able to understand every word. In clear and distinct utterance I promised to fulfil his request, and was quite pleased with him in my heart of hearts, for it seems to me that one can always learn something from a schoolmaster. “Not loudly, but distinctly and slowly”—that is suitable for the pulpit also.

The weather seems somewhat strange to me. There is no sunshine. The mountains are sharply outlined, and show the black veins and boulders of their rocky mass. The peaks of the highest mountain ranges rise up in radiant whiteness. There is a lead-grey sky in the background, and the light appears to issue from the mountains. The trees rustle and wave hither and thither all day long, and sometimes the wind wafts warm air-waves

straight from an oven as it were. Lukewarm water-drops fall on to one's face, and yet it is not raining. All the ruts and paths have changed into brooks, everywhere the yellow water flows. In the valley, where but yesterday smooth snow was lying, there is to-day a mass of brownish lakes and dirty brooks. Our houses are protected by their slight elevation, but the water has got into almost everyone else's yard or cellar. The landlord of the new inn tells how the wine casks in his cellar seem to have come to life, and are rocking to and fro on the water.

I woke up in the night and heard it thundering. But when I listened closer, it was not a thunder-storm at all. It was something else. It rumbled and rolled, and made the windows shake. Sometimes it was close at hand, and sometimes at a distance. But it went on continuously. I began to feel uncomfortable, and got up to wake someone. But there were people in the street already, and shouts of many voices. I called out of the window, asking what was the matter.

"The snowdrifts are coming down from the mountains," I was told.

"And what is to be done?" I asked.

"When the old pastor was here, we used to go and pray," said an old man, who was standing at his door with a crutch and a lantern, surrounded by several barking dogs. "If your reverence

wants to go up into the church to pray, I will light you up with the lantern."

"Please, Father, let us go and pray," several women called up to my window.

"We will go," I said, "but let the able-bodied men keep watch in case the waters come."

"Kimpel, the blacksmith, is calling them together," I was told. From the Square came the sound of trumpets, and out of the houses came the men with torches and hatchets and pickaxes. They ran down towards the valley where the last houses of our village stand. I longed to go down too, but the others wished to go up to the church, and when they seek consolation in prayer, it is my duty to assist them. The valley was as dark as a cave. The rumbling and thundering and cracking continued. In the midst of it, sounded the lowing of the cattle that had been let out of their stables. I was feeling very frightened. The women, children, and a few old men ran breathlessly ahead, even the old man with the crutch was in front, and in five minutes we were at the top. Karl had already lit the altar candles and I knelt down and began to say the Litany of All Saints.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us. All holy angels, martyrs and confessors, pray for us." How much greater is the intensity of our prayer in times of trouble and danger than in ordinary times, when we pray only with our lips!

But I could not concentrate my mind on my devotions. My heart was with those who were in danger, who were perhaps drowning. Where is the priest's place if not with the dying?

Quite suddenly I ceased praying, threw aside the book, and hurried towards the valley. As the people filed slowly out of church, the man with the crutch stood by the holy-water font, sprinkled the passers-by, and is reported to have said—"That praying did not take long. That's a fine kind of priest who won't pray. God Almighty is sure to forsake us if we don't pray."

Ceaselessly, but almost cheerfully, the people were working at damming off the water. Towards morning the noise abated somewhat. At day-dawn we were able to see the devastation in the valley. In several of the farms the chests and tables are said to be floating about. The water is of a yellowish-brown colour, covered with bubbles and greasy in places. I should never have believed that water could be so ugly. There is no news of any special disaster. A hunter came up the slopes from Unterschuttbach, and he reported that the houses were still standing, but that the village was inaccessible on every side. Many people were suffering want, but they certainly would not die of thirst. There is no news from Oberschuttbach. The blacksmith had sent up early in the morning to see how things

were getting on. But the messenger said he had been unable to find his way. The bridges were destroyed and the waters were all flowing in unwonted directions. The snow has disappeared, even on the northern slopes. Here and there a mound of earth with uprooted trees rises above the waters. There are countless ravens croaking ceaselessly and sometimes diving down into the water. My servant Ruprecht says he has seen a living deer swimming. Others tell of different kinds of bodies.

As there is still no news from Oberschuttbach, several men with tools have started for the place. In the meantime the report has spread that a giant drift has dammed the water down at the Keilerstein, where the plateau ceases and the brook flows down into the Schwarzkamm ravine, and that it has already advanced as far as the Fock farms.

I walked round everywhere as far as I was able. The abbot had told me that one required four additional legs in the Torwald. I understand it now, but a village priest is not a knight, and he must go over stones or through moors, but *per pedes apostolorum*.

The torrents had not decreased at midday. They were coming down from greater heights. Behind the Kirchenriegel a drift went down with several fine firs and other trees, which are now

lying on the field half-buried in mud. The crack in the mountain-side is quite red, but, thank God ! it shows rock. St Mary's may stand another thousand years before that rock is washed away.

After dinner, news came from Oberschuttbach at last. Several drifts had gone down into the ravines behind it and had buried three houses. The inhabitants of the first were able to save themselves. The second still rises partly from the surrounding masses of earth and stone, and it is believed that the inhabitants may still be living. The third house has entirely disappeared, and no one can say to-day where it stood. There is no time for writing now. Kimpel the smith is up there already, and everyone who can shoulder a rake or a spade must go up too.

In the lower district the lake is rising, and approaches nearer to the village every hour.

May 1875.

I will now chronicle how the Lord has afflicted us.

In Oberschuttbach things are worse than they appeared at first. Some few farm-buildings have fallen, and are leaning against the mountain-side without having been utterly destroyed. One house seems to be standing in mid-air, all its foundations having been washed away by the water, and if one looks in at one of the windows,

one can see the muddy water flowing down below. Another house is so encrusted with débris, fragments of trees and roots, that one would have to hew a path to the roof. The people are walking in and out of a top window which forms the only entrance. Just behind the village a block of stone larger than a good-sized house has remained lying. It is reported to have rolled slowly down amid the swaying masses, and each time it turned the earth quaked right down to Hies-im-Grund. The Almighty stopped the block before it was able to crush the village with its heavy thud.

We saved one man only from the wreck. He was a strong young fellow, said to have been full of life and vigour. But now he crouches behind the maple tree and stares into vacancy. He knows nothing except that on the fatal night his bedroom walls suddenly cracked, and the boards of the floor broke in pieces with a jerk, like a trap-door that has been burst open. And if he is asked what happened next he winks and laughs.

But they went on digging steadily. Then came the news from the lower district, that the trout were dying of drought in the bed of the Schwarzkamm brook, that the water was rising at the Keilerstein, and that the lake had almost risen as far as the village of Unterschuttbach.

"Pray, pray," cried the old man with the crutch again. They call him "Crooked Christl."

Others could hardly have endured looking at a picture of a saint in church, with the Heavenly ones sitting and standing perfectly still, while two villages with their inhabitants were in the greatest danger. And as I did nothing but urge the people on to work, he appealed to the sacristan, saying—"Do go and ring the bell, that the folks may go and pray. If they are all down there at the water, they won't be able to bell the cat. They'll all be drowned, and we, too, and all the innocent ones as well. No, thank you. Why should we perish with this sinful people? Go, my good fellow, and ring the holy bells. It's the flood, sent to punish the people for not praying. The pastor is no good either. Go and ring, man." I shall have to speak to Christl.

They worked for days up on the heights and down in the valley. Up above, the water has run off, the fields are growing green, and are covered with white and yellow flowers. It almost seems as if they have grown out of the snow and water. And quite close to them are wide stretches of mud and débris and boulders. We had to seek for the brook amidst all the fresh channels. It has hollowed out a new bed for itself. It used to form the boundary between two farmers' lands. They began to quarrel as soon as it disappeared, but I begged them to wait until the lake rose and made all things equal. And Kimpel the

blacksmith sent them a message, that if anyone quarrels now, he must forfeit two oxen, and have his land taken over by the parish.

The dead body of a little girl has been brought out of the house in Oberschuttbach, that has been almost washed away. All the rest form part of a vast pile of débris, that towers like a mountain in the midst of the village. They say that fourteen have lost their lives. Now let the fellow go and ring the bell!

Down below, the general excitement is still greater. The lake keeps coming closer to the village, and even forms a semicircle round it. Many of the people come up to us and never weary of telling us how fortunate we are in being a few feet higher. At the Keilerstein hundreds of people are said to be at work. All able-bodied parishioners are at work, and even the other districts, notably the monastery, has sent workmen. But many of them are quite downcast, and say that it is quite impossible to dig off a mountain. Why ever not? What ought to be removed, if not a mountain? But it must be a terrible weight that is hindering the off-flow. If it is indeed so, then good-bye to my valley of the Torwald; in the future ships will sail upon thee, and the legends will tell how three flourishing villages — perhaps they will even make cities of them—sank in the lake.

On my first Sunday I wanted to deliver a sermon of warm welcome, but now it must be otherwise. The water in the lower valley is rising. It is rising slowly day by day. Of course it rises all the more gradually, the greater the expanse it covers. The waters are coming down from all the mountains and they cannot flow off. The schoolmaster has calculated that by the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul the village of St Mary will be under water too, and the sunniest of spring days smile down upon our misery!

I urged them on to work yet once again, and myself shouldered a hatchet. Then I went to the women—"I am going down to the Keilerstein. Who goes with me?"

"If you think that help in such need is the best kind of prayer, Father, and if you are going down yourself, we shall not stay at home either," they say, "and, after all, God helps him who helps himself."

They shouldered everything of tools that they were able to lay hands on—pickaxes, spades, crowbars, wheelbarrows; also sacks of flour, loaves of bread and pots of dripping for their husbands and themselves. If it had not been such deadly earnest, it would have been funny to set out as I was doing at the head of twelve elderly women—the young ones had gone down already—down to kill the dragon. Crooked

Christl shouted after us that he would pray very hard, that we might be able to accomplish something. The schoolmaster was with us. He carried no tools. With short, quick steps he was carrying down the great idea that one ought to be able to pierce the mountain from below. The people of the Torwald had already bored one hole, the "Wurmlucken"; why should they not be able to do so in this case?—for the water.

Climbing down the mountain-slopes, we took about three hours to descend. The bright lake gleamed between the forest trees. It was no longer muddy, but clear and blue like a veritable mountain lake. Trout were already reported to be swimming about in this new lake of ours. In its midst the pine forest still towers for to-day. To-morrow water-swallows—trout—will build their nests in those very trees. Unterschuttbach is like a small Venice.

When we came to the pass where the Keilerstein rises almost perpendicularly, we could see high above and opposite it the broad crack from which the avalanche, or, rather, the land-slip, had detached itself. We heard too the firing of shots. The slope was crowded with people busily at work. They were blowing up rocks, they were digging and scraping, sawing up the trunks of trees that had fallen, and countless carts were carrying off the materials. Boldly and bravely

they were working in the most dangerous places ; they were proudly doing duty as one man. One single thought, one will, one force was paramount, and the strength of the people of the Torwald was that of one strong man. They are succeeding, something cried aloud within me, as I saw the successes they had already achieved. The blacksmith was walking up and down giving orders here and there. His half-grown son, Rolf, was standing in the midst of stones and rubbish and was working away with his pickaxe. I like that boy the more I see of him. There is something so sure and steady, and something so wonderfully sunny about him. He does not look round, he works on and on, as if he had to save the valley all by himself ; and he works with a happy face, as if he were sure that it were going to be saved !

When the people saw that the priest and the schoolmaster had come too, they seemed to take fresh courage. But the schoolmaster clambered straight over the débris to where the smith stood, and advised him to pierce a hole right through with a well-bore. His advice was too late, for they had already sent for one, and the schoolmaster and I now began to use it. At first we were laughed at, but when a first small stream began to trickle through our hole, and we began to make another, they understood.

We worked the whole of the following night by red torchlight. We were very cheerful over it. A great danger which one is endeavouring to stave off is not half so terrifying as a lesser one which one is forced to face inertly. But in the morning came the news that the lake had already advanced as far as the first houses of St Mary's, and reached up to the knees of the crucifix on the fence of the landlord of the New Inn. "It begins at the gate of the fence, and it ends at the cross on the church tower," the people said.

Then, at about nine o'clock in the morning, the masses of earth began to move. The people dispersed quickly, and rushed up the slopes. They were not going to work any more, only to watch. If I could only describe the sight! The partition-wall that had been pierced from both sides began to crumble away, then to glide down, and finally it collapsed heavily, but almost without a sound. Immediately all the other piles of earth fell together, and with indescribable force the water burst forth. Wildly the great, thick, muddy tide whirled and foamed and rushed out through the Schwarzkamm, tearing everything with it as it went. The avalanches rolled along the banks, trees were falling and heavy boulders hurled themselves slowly out amidst the mud and heaving trunks.

"I should not like to have a house down in

Gruenau," said one man, and many agreed with him.

The schoolmaster almost jumped for joy. He did not say it openly, but in secret he looked upon himself as the saviour, although everyone knew that the boring had been ordered by Kimpel the blacksmith. Good old Kornstock! I wonder if it is the same with his compositions. Perhaps there, too, he has excellent ideas, only a little bit later than someone else.

The people now demanded that I should at once say a Mass of Thanksgiving on the very spot. The altar-stones round about are of course consecrated by God, but to enable me to celebrate Mass on them, they would have to be consecrated by the bishop also.

The lake is slowly draining off. A vast field of mud remains. The people say that the ordinary processes of watering and manuring the fields is unnecessary this year. Thus the toil at the Keilerstein has its twofold reward. They seem to put full confidence in me, and some of them say that if his Reverence had not taken part, things would not have gone off so well. Words, of course! Of what use would they have been, if they had not been obeyed?

They have brought the girl who was dug out at Oberschuttbach. She was found quite uninjured amongst the ruins and the broken boards. She

was lying in her bed as if asleep, and no one knows why she died so suddenly. They deposited the little coffin in front of the statue of St Joseph on the Kirchenriegel. From all the three villages folks came to give the solemn burial to this one body, that is denied to the other victims. In the person of this one child, as it were, we laid all the other dead to rest with prayer and blessing.

But when they reached St Joseph's statue they refused to move, and appeared to be waiting for something. They looked first at the white deal coffin and then at me. At last Kimpel the smith came up to me and told me that the late pastor had always held the inquest, and would I be good enough to do the same. That had not been included in my training, and according to the instructions I have received, I ought to say to every body that lies cold and dead : "Brother in Christ, thou art not dead, thou wilt rise again, to everlasting life."

But a decaying body must be buried, and by law that may only be done after the inquest. There is no doctor in the Torwald, so I went up to the coffin. They raised the coffin-lid. An angel lay within. Her thin hands were folded over her breast, and they clasped with a rosary. She was dressed in white. She was as pale as wax. Her black hair was parted in the middle, and was bound with a wreath of rosemary. Her long

lashes were so lightly closed that one could still see beneath them into the dead eyes. I touched her cheeks, they were cold as clay. They all crowded round to see the coffin. I made a sign and they closed it. Then we went up to the churchyard. The young larches and birch trees were growing green; the birds were singing in every tree and bush, the bees were humming, a white butterfly was fluttering above the small, deep, narrow grave, and the sun shone warm and bright from heaven above. Thus it was that we laid the body to rest. There was no sound of mourning from those present. But from many a stifled sob, I noticed how much sorrow was being suppressed. For some there were who had buried mother, brother and comrades beneath the débris and were thinking of them now.

It is not customary with us to speak at the graveside, but my heart was so full that I said the following words, after I had given the blessing:—"My dear people, it has not yet been granted to me, who am a newcomer, to give you a word of public greeting, nor yet to ask you to open your hearts to me as you did to my predecessor, and to assure you that I will stand by you at all time. But before this has taken place, the Lord has bidden us unite in a great misfortune and a terrible trial. We have thus been able to show that we belong together. In these

few days, I have grown to know the people of the Torwald, and have seen that they are worthy of much love. Here at this grave, believing in the resurrection of the dead and the life eternal, I, the priest of St Mary's, vow to be to you a faithful teacher and friend. On the great grave at Oberschuttbach, I will raise a cross in everlasting remembrance that priest and people, living and dead, are united in the name of the divine Redeemer."

I ceased from speaking, for we were all overcome by emotion.

Then we went into church, to hold a service for the departed victims of the catastrophe. There was no catafalque, no skull, and no black flag. The saints looked kindly from the walls, the angels smiled, the red, blue and green sun-rays were reflected in the chandelier. The organ sounded sweet, and the school children, full of the joy of living, sang an almost joyful hymn.

After the service, when the people dispersed to go to their work of everyday, I stayed up there and looked over the churchyard wall out into the landscape. For the first time I really saw where I was. The scene was one of indescribable beauty and grandeur. In the plain lay the fields and the forests and the white sand-hills with the glittering river—everything calm and distant and boundless. . . .

The schoolmaster came up to me. "There's a clear view," he said in his hasty way—"glorious, glorious, if one could only turn it into music!"

"It is music for the eye."

"That's true enough. And it's wonderful when one climbs up that music. I have been myself. To-day one can even see the highest point. I call it the high C."

"And which is the highest point that you define thus?"

"If you will be kind enough to come over to where I am standing, Father, and to look over the top of that tree—yes, that is the one—you will see it, far beyond the icefields. Do you see it, Father? It is a tiny white peak. I always call it the high C, but people call it the little light."

On that peak there is a prism of ice or snow that is sometimes so brightly lit up by the sun, that it shines down into our valley like a candle, particularly early in the morning, when it is still dark.

As we walked on, the schoolmaster grew more and more preoccupied. He did not speak about the mountains nor about the funeral. Finally he drew a piece of crumpled printed paper from his breast-pocket.

"Father," he said almost bashfully, while he stood still and put the paper into my hand—"read that—the piece that is marked. It has come to-day."

While I did so, he stood stroking his long beard with both hands and looking at me.

"I must congratulate you," I was able to say. It was a cutting from a paper. In Eschfurt a choral society had put on its concert programme a song, "Sweet Love, Farewell," by Michael Kornstock. Nothing was mentioned beyond that it had been sung, but Longbeard was delighted.

"Now we shall get on," he said. "If the world once knows, it will appreciate. The operas will have their turn, too; then, it only wants patience. Patience brings even operas to the front. I have also discovered another couple of songs, Father, the most beautiful you can imagine."

He collects the words and tunes of folk-songs and adapts them for artistes. That is all right, but I must see whether the children at school are taught to read and write properly.

As we were walking out of the church gate, we saw Crooked Christl standing at the wall. When he is not out begging or praying, he occupies a small room in the house of the sacristan and tailor, Karl Gross. He looked pointedly at Kornstock and said he wished to speak with me alone. And when we were together, he said he would like to make his confession and receive the Holy Sacrament there and then.

"Are you not well?" I asked.

"Thank you for your kind inquiry, but it is not that. One cannot receive the blessed Sacraments often enough. There is something so wonderful about the Holy Feast."

I heard his confession, but he cannot receive the Communion until to-morrow after Mass. He did not quite like that.

"But suppose one were to die a sudden death without the divine viaticum," was his objection.

He is a peculiar person, a peasant come down in the world. Overmuch prayer has made him forget his work, and he has become the village parasite. Folks call him "Dog Christl," because all the dogs in the street run after him and growl at him. And if he strikes out with his crutch, the creatures grow even more excited. His crutch does not frighten them, for he cannot hit them. If he tries to do so he falls over.

29th June.

If we have no bad weather, we shall have an exceptionally fruitful year. The abundant fodder is already driving up the price of cattle. The people say that from time immemorial the corn has not stood as well as to-day. That is due to the mud. But everyone is very pleased, and when one goes for a walk towards evening, one hears singing and sounds of rejoicing everywhere.

But yet to-day has been a solemn one. We

have dedicated the cross on the hill at Oberschuttbach. The hill rises in the middle of the village, where formerly there were vegetable gardens and two cottages. It is almost a mountain.

A path has been made up to the summit, and on the summit stands the cross. It is made of larchwood painted red, and is some fifteen feet in height. A gigantic mound and a gigantic cross! The master, with his choir, sang the beautiful hymn of the "Cross of Christ," and the summer afternoon lent its pure beauty and solemnity to our memorial service. And the mountains gazed down upon us with such an air of innocence and kindness, as if it were no fault of theirs, that the catastrophe had occurred.

When I was saying the Litany of all Saints after the benediction, someone suddenly burst out laughing convulsively. It was the same youth who had been saved from the débris.

"Ha, ha!" he giggled, without being able to stop, "I ought to be down below, and yet I am up above—up above and saying my prayers for myself. Ha, ha, ha!"

It was horrible. The man who has risen from the dead has lost his reason. Sometimes, when he is told to work, he lies down on the grass, stretches out all fours and says he is in heaven.

He reminds me of that funny beggarman at

Hohenmauth. He always said—"Everyone has to die once, but I've done my share. I was drowned in the Castle pond. But I have come to life again, and since then I won't accept any suffering or any bad halfpence, for I am living in eternal bliss."

25th July.

At last everything is settled again, and I can quietly begin to describe it all. For if these are to be the Chronicles of St Mary's, I must write about the people and affairs everyday.

There are about seventy farms and a dozen cottages. The timber in the Torwald is sound and as hard as stone, and has a certain value for building purposes in other parts where they cut down the trees when they are far too young, and can therefore not find enough. Our timber will last to the end of the world. The people themselves grow and provide the necessaries of their own lives, and money is rarely seen and used. They pay me tithes, but I take no pay for my ministrations in church. Regina says we have more than enough with what they bring in the way of flour, fat, meat, eggs, poultry, wool, leather and flax. We are able to feed and clothe the poor also. There are about seven persons in the parish at present who are unable to earn their living. Belonging to the rectory there is also wood, pasture-land and a fine garden. Fortun-

ately, Regina is a good thrifty housekeeper. I should waste a good deal. I do not care for looking after things so closely. We have a manservant too. His name is Ruprecht, and he does the work of a bailiff. All other duties and repairs are done by the parishioners. If ever I want to drive to the Riedel Pass, the blacksmith's oxen and cart are at my disposal. But I do not wish to go to any distance. I do not care to look back into the great world, not even with my eyes, and far less with my heart. God has brought me home, home to my idyll. It is not Rousseau's or Gessner's idyll; it is more prosaic, but more lasting. There are exceptions even here, but on the whole they are capable, good, simple-minded and contented people. And I will be their shepherd until I die.

My parishioners are not tall and not exactly fine of figure. They are healthy, not intellectual, and yet clever; not so much wildly passionate as they are comfortable and cheery. Their vocation is work from morning till night, and their recreation is very often work again, or else religion. What concerts, theatres and museums are to other people, the church is to the Torwald folks. They look upon religion less as a duty than as a need, and I would not even like to assert that their characteristic virtues are a result of their religion. These people are naturally honest, patient, bene-

volent and pious. No poor man ever goes from their doors without a gift, and their doors have no bolts. Sickness and misfortune they bear calmly, as something that is a matter of course. There are only three or four days in the year in which they eat more than enough or get drunk. I have seen in the register that there are a few illegitimate children, and the year before last there was a murder. Some of the wealthy peasants, I am told, keep their money in iron pots. The farmers' chief delight is in their oxen and their calves. It is their great aim to have a fine breed of cattle, and in quest of new kinds they even undertake long journeys. In consequence the oxen of the Torwald are far-famed. Oxen draw all the carts; there is not a single horse throughout the Torwald valley.

The people's food consists of flour, milk, fat and vegetables. They eat meat only on Sundays and holidays. Their clothes are made of linen, leather and coarse woollen cloth. The men say that the cut of their knee-breeches and coats has remained unaltered since they first peopled the valley. The women are more inclined to favour new fashions, and are beginning to dress in cotton stuffs. The landlord's daughter from Unterschuttbach came to church on Whitsunday wearing a red silk shawl, which caused a great outcry of admiration on the one hand and disgust

on the other. Kimpel the blacksmith said to Wastl the grocer that, if she went about the country in such finery, he would be having unwelcome visitors one night.

The farms are large and built of wood. On the weather side the walls are shingle-covered and the roofs the same. In the kitchens they have open fires. The rooms, of which there are two or three to each house, have low walls and small windows, but they are often wainscotted and very cosy. In every house there is a book of sermons, and even the people of the old school seem to have learned to read. Most of the houses are clean, and even in the smallest cottages the floors are scrubbed on Saturdays. There is a great difference between them and the peasant huts down in the country, where one cannot even sit down without soiling one's clothes or attracting live creatures.

The families in the Torwald date from very remote times.

The servants are related to the farmers, and are treated as members of the family. The eldest son of the house inherits the farm, and the other children either enter his service or have their portion of the inheritance paid out to them, and go as servants at other farms. They are called man-servants and maid-servants, but there is no question of service. They just do as much as

they can, and the owner does not do otherwise. They have what they want, and the owner has generally not much more.

The preserves belong to the monastery, and damage done by the wild animals has to be paid for. The present abbot does not object to paying them; he is not unreasonable, and he knows that the farmer must protect his land.

The people of the Torwald have a peculiar agreement with the monastery as regards taxes. As in the days of paying tribute, they still deliver the raw produce to the monastery, which in turn pays the authorities in money. The blacksmith has a servant who always puts a word in when she hears something said. As we were talking about the taxes, she cried—"Oh holy Joseph! why ever do we want to pay taxes to the fathers? They ought to pay us, for working hard and giving them things to live upon." The same maid always makes fun of me because I wear trousers, and because, as she says, my eyes must "feel cold." It appears that my predecessor always wore high boots with shining tops that went up under his cloak. I wear long trousers, to her surprise. And why do I wear "winter windows" on my nose, she asks, if my eyes are not cold. I suppose I shall have to get top-boots; in this place it is better to have leather leggings than cloth ones.

But I cannot do without the "winter windows"; a pastor cannot be too keen-sighted.

Simon Eschgartner, the blacksmith, has told me a good deal of the above. I like having a chat with him; he is a clever man. He always talks of "we," meaning the parish thereby. His son Rolf has a good head too. The boy has often strangely quaint ideas, when one can get hold of him. Otherwise he climbs up the roof of the smithy, where the shingles are covered with green moss. Then he lies down full-length in the sun and it is in this fashion that his mental growth proceeds. Resting his head in his hands, he reads Waibel's *Life of Jesus*. He ought to study and become my successor. But I don't think he wants to leave the village, and he would be the very boy to run away from the seminary and back into the forest, just because he would be so homesick.

Karl Gross, the sacristan, gives me some trouble. He is said to have gone about the world a good deal in former years as a travelling artisan, and last Sunday he declared to the innkeeper at Unterschuttbach that he knew a good few things and did not believe in God. The folks only made fun of him, but when I heard it I took him to task. At first he made all sorts of excuses, but when I kept him to the point, he freely admitted

that he really does not believe in God. He said he had never seen a God, except such as he had made himself, out of flour. And if a man who has as much to do with crawling about between altars and sacred pictures as a sacristan has, cannot discover Him, he can't be blamed for being an unbeliever. I was quite horrified at the quiet and deliberate way in which he said this. Otherwise he is an active man who supports his wife and children, and gives them a Christian upbringing. He is excellent, too, in his capacity as verger. I cannot understand it.

"Gross," I said to him, "do not make a fool of yourself. You do not yourself believe that you have no faith. After the third glass many a man has said foolish things."

Then he gave in quietly and said that, though he saw no glass in front of him, neither first nor third, yet for my sake he would refrain from saying such things.

"But you are not to think them either," I cried.

Then this terrible person continued—"No one has ever come back to earth. Though we pray, everything remains the same up above; when we are in misery no helping hand is outstretched, and the heathens fare no worse than the Christians. We saw how helpless man was this spring when the floods came."

But I quickly interrupted him. "And during that very flood, God's help was specially manifest."

"The folks helped themselves, I should say," said Karl, softly. "But it is not right to talk about such things with your Reverence and I beg your pardon."

"No, Gross, you will not escape me thus. Just consider whether St Mary's church can do with a faithless verger." Hardly had I said these words than I regretted them. I was driving him away instead of drawing him back. And I pretended to be a good shepherd! I wanted to add a kindly word, and to tell him that his deeds showed a more Christian spirit than his words, but he interrupted me—"It is all nonsense. If one gives heed to the devil with one ear, he sets horns on one's head." It was something of a consolation to me that he still believes in the devil. "I always admit that folks must have faith," continued the tailor; "otherwise it would be impossible to keep them in order. I quite admit that."

Then he went away, little thinking what fear he left in my heart. On the following day at Mass he was again the attentive and pious server at the altar, saying his rosary with a loud voice and a pious air. Crooked Christl would rather have had three rosaries than one. He always remains

kneeling long after the service is over, and his moving lips show how intensely he is praying. Then he goes up to the pictures of the saints and kisses them, then he rubs his forehead with the altarcloth, and finally he hobbles to the door and sprinkles himself over and over with holy water from the stoup. Last of all he prays outside before the cross. If he would only pray for his benefactors, he would be doing some good ; but as far as one can hear from what he says, he is always beseeching God and all saints not to let him go to hell. Hell is his one fear and dread by day and night. He exhorts everyone whom he can get hold of to be diligent in prayer, so that he may not go to hell. He tells them to confess their sins as quickly as possible, for everything is a sin. It is a sin to be proud, and the man who is proud of his new coat, like Poldl the smith, or of a silver watch-chain, like tailor Karl, is sure to go to hell. Sloth is a deadly sin, and the man who misses the holy Mass because he can't get out of his warm bed in the morning, like Sep the carpenter does on Sundays, will have to go to hell. Gluttony is a deadly sin, and drunkenness too, and the peasant from Zaunstieg and Golo the pond-digger are sure to go. And a man who looks at a woman, like all the young men in this wicked world, and even the old ones too, the sinners, down with them into the everlasting fire,

if they do not confess their deadly sin. That is the Christian doctrine according to the old man—God knows who has taught it to him. Sermons about charity, self-sacrifice, patience, mercy, God and heaven do not content him. “Folks are much too bad for heaven,” he declares. He comes to confession at least once a week, and latterly I have been obliged to tell him—“Christl, do bring your own sins, as well as a whole sackful of other people’s.”

These two men, the infidel Karl and the bigoted Christl, are next-door neighbours. Is that one of the Almighty’s little jests?

I never see Master Simon the smith in church, except on Sunday. Then he sits in his seat, does not look to the right or to the left, only straight into his prayer-book. He leaves it lying in the seat all through the week, and his large spectacles form a book-marker between the leaves. He does not require them at work. Once I turned the pages of his prayer-book ; it is very old and has a large print. Upon the empty title-pages are inscribed the names of the smith’s ancestors, and the year of their births and deaths. The family of the Eschgartners goes further back than our parish register, and all of them have been peasants and blacksmiths in the Torwald. A real race of nobles, but nobles who have done hard work for centuries.

15th August.

To-day Rolf, the smith's fair-haired son, came to ask me to lend him a book. He told me that he had read all the schoolmaster's books, and had plenty of leisure for reading on Sundays and Saints' days. I have already observed what an impression books make upon him. His soul is like wax. He would be easily spoiled if he fell into the wrong hands. I asked him if he would not like to go out to the monastery one day. He shook his head and said that it was livelier at home. I gave him the *Imitation of Christ* and a Catholic almanac, so that he might have pictures to look at too. He said that he did not care for pictures, because they took his thoughts off the reading. I said that it was quite right to give one's soul a rest in the kingdom of God on rest days, and I told him to come to me, if there was anything in the books that he did not understand.

"One can understand everything," he replied.

"Of course one can—you child!"

16th August.

My duties do not take up much time now. At first I took great pains over my sermons. I was unskilled, and had to commit them to memory. Many of them might have gone to press straight away, so carefully had I worked them out. But

my parishioners went to sleep over them. Only one day, when my duty had called me some distance away and I had been unable to prepare anything, and said in the pulpit just what I felt in my heart, they looked at me, and Regina says that some of them had tears in their eyes. After the Amen the congregation said a loud—"May God reward you!" Since then I often do the same. I speak from the gospels, and the Sermon on the Mount. I tell them legends, half in their own dialect, as if I were talking to them in their own cottages. I speak about their joys and sorrows, about the characteristics and beauties of the seasons; I speak severely when I know that they are in high spirits, but mildly and consolingly when they are in special difficulties, and my church is crowded with listeners. The sixth commandment has to do duty very often, and an impressive explanation of the fourth is not superfluous either. They like to hear about the Mother of God, about guardian angels, and about all fair things that do not always remind them of their duty. Most of all they like to hear that God will give them fair weather for the hay-harvest, to reward their virtues. And generally speaking, a short sermon and a long sausage is very much to their taste.

So I have a good deal of time for writing. But somehow I prefer to glean; so I go gleaning with the reapers. The corn is in splendid con-

dition, and in spite of the hard work, the people are full of good cheer.

The day before yesterday I was called away from the field. A messenger from the mountains had come. One of the herdswomen on the pasture at Zaunstiegel had fallen over the rocks and had injured herself severely. I fetched the holy oil and the Sacred Host from the church at once. Regina put bread and smoked meat into the bag that the messenger carried, as well as the lantern. Then we went up. We walked for two hours over grassy mountain pastures. As we passed, the shepherds knelt before their huts to do honour to the Lord, symbolised by the Sacred Host, which is seldom enough seen upon their slopes. When we reached the hut at Zaunstiegel at last, the sick woman was lying motionless upon the straw. Her eyes were growing dim in death and at the mouth there were signs of blood. It was too late. She was a young woman ; her features were distorted by the sudden horror of death. A bony and red-bearded man was there too ; he was running his brown hands through his hair and reproaching the dead woman most bitterly. "It was sinful carelessness and nothing else!" he shouted with a shrill voice. "As if there had not been enough food everywhere, that she must needs fetch it up from those wicked rocks. Sin-

ful carelessness! You wicked girl, you went over the rocks out of spite! You fell over, and now you are dead!" He threw himself upon the corpse with a howl. "And now you can't go to heaven, and it's my fault! You'll have to go to purgatory, and it's my fault!" Then he went down on his knees before me. The Sacred Host was still in my hands. He clasped his hands together and cried for mercy on her poor soul—"We two held together, but we were not in lawful wedlock. And now she has not been able to confess. Lord God, receive my confession instead of hers!"

I shuddered as I heard this man of the woods praying so wildly for the woman he had loved. I believe I said a few kind words, blessed the body, and arranged when it was to be brought to the churchyard.

Then I went out into the open and looked out over the wide, still land. Oh, thou eternal mountain world, what hast thou not beheld of life and death upon thee!

As we went down, the lantern served not only for the Sacrament, that I had to take back with me, it also lit up the forest as the night came on. When we reached the valley we began to talk. My companion knew little more of the desperate man whom we had left up above than that his name was Hoisel, the wood-cutter, and that one could not make him out. My pre-

decessor had latterly had dealings with Hoisel, but nothing else was known.

Again and again they tell me about the old gentleman ; he must have been much respected among the people. He was at the rectory for nineteen years, and according to all that I am told, he must have been conscientious and full of self-sacrifice and gentleness. Stories are told of him in which he appears to have been a very saint. I asked the companion of my journey what was the real reason for his being taken to the lunatic asylum.

“Who can tell?” replied the messenger. “He was never at home, but he just wandered about over hill and dale. Sometimes he imagined he was a schoolmaster, and then again a policeman who had to pursue evil-doers. He was always speaking of trials and gallows, but otherwise he was such a good-natured old gentleman. They say he got like that from eating some kind of berry. He went home and then off again and then home again, and all the time he was writing hard, and nobody knows what it was about. He lost his head and he couldn’t preach any more, and when he was saying Mass, he would suddenly begin to pray aloud for people who were hanging on the gallows. And then they fetched him away. He did not live long after he went mad.”

Regina knows nothing about it either. She only says again and again with tears—"I cannot bear to think of what he looked like when he came home from his wanderings. He was nothing but skin and bone." She said she had asked him what it all meant. "What it means, my dear Regina?" he replied. "It is a terrible fate—a terrible fate."

18th August.

We buried the woman to-day. Regina has heard some mysterious rumours about her death. It is said that she sought it of her own free will, and had a reason for doing so. Her lover, Hoisel the wood-cutter, was not at the funeral, but afterwards he came to see me at the rectory. He hardly dares look me in the face. He is ashamed of facing people, but he says he must speak to me, to arrange for three Masses to be read for the repose of her soul. He began opening his purse with the straps.

"You can put that back, Hoisel," I said, "I will read the Masses for you. But you must do something too to save her."

He said he was only too ready to go on a pilgrimage for her and gain indulgences.

"Indulgences are all very well, my good Hoisel, but a new patent has just been issued, and they are no longer obtainable by pilgrimages, but only by virtuous living."

"Oh, Father," he exclaimed, "it is easy to talk of virtuous living. How often have I not made up my mind to it. I vowed it by the light of my eyes and by my mother's soul. It's all in vain. When temptation comes, it comes. And the more you fight against it at first, the stronger it grows in the end. You cannot eat, you cannot sleep. Your pulses throb as if you had got brain-fever ; you see blue as if you were going to have an apoplectic fit ; you grow like a wild animal, so that you hardly know yourself—and in the morning at sunrise — you are a miserable sinner."

Then he rushed up and down the room. "Yes, Father, you are a priest, you don't know all that. But this wild flesh and blood of ours—it's the very devil."

"Yes, yes, I do understand you, Hoisel, but you must make a definite resolution."

"I do, and I will do it again to-day. I will be good, and I will pray for mercy and deliverance a thousand times over. Oh, Father, I am a very great sinner."

I promised to pray for him and to give him my counsel in whatever difficulties he might come to me. He is a mystery to me. When he drank the glass of wine that I had put before him, he began to laugh in a loud and unseemly manner ; he shuddered and red blotches spread

over his weather-beaten face. Poor passionate man! I thought to myself.

24th August.

I have been making inquiries about Hoisel the wood-cutter. One cannot gather much. He seems to be a wild, fickle fellow. A hypocrite? No, he is not that. According to the register, he was born in 1847, the son of a Bohemian woman who was at work for a fortnight in the Torwald. After he had served in the army, the people say that he was for some time stable-man at the monastery. Then he disappeared, but turned up again two years ago, and began wood-cutting in the forest at Haselbach. He is said to be very clever at his craft, especially in building bridges over ravines, and for this reason he always finds work in the monastery forests. But they say that no woman will go up to the mountain pastures since he has been there. And yet others again praise his piety. He is always present at the pilgrimages and processions organised in other parts of the country. He always has money, and pays for Masses to be said. He prefers to do his devotional exercises when he is unobserved. Once he was discovered locked in the wood-cutter's hut and scourging himself with briar rods. Where is the hypocrite in that? Poor passionate man, I still maintain.

30th August.

The school is in good order. In the street the children are almost too polite, and I can hardly walk along, because they are all so anxious to kiss my hand. I shall be better pleased when they give me a quiet Christian greeting instead. The school is roomy, but is growing too small for seventy-five children, and one master is hardly sufficient. Kornstock does as much as he can, and the children read, write, do sums, and sing. The more capable ones know the elements of history and a little natural history. Kimpel always says that something of agriculture, suitable to the Torwald, ought to be taught as well. I also think it would be more useful than the history of the Persians, and the manners and customs of the African negroes. The master, on the other hand, looks upon singing, violin and flute playing as the most important of all. He spends his evening hours and Sunday afternoons in giving gratuitous religious instruction. Many of the boys are very intelligent, and the good man is thus rendering the parish a great service.

I teach the Catechism in school once a week, and twice a week I teach the Gospel and the Acts. In the pulpit I discourse to the people; but in school the children have to tell me what they have read in the sacred books or what ideas they have about them. What one does not know, another does,

and the Lord Jesus has become such a good friend of ours, that little Apollonia, the daughter of the farmer at Reithof, told me the other day, in confidence, that she is knitting winter socks at home for the dear Lord Jesus.

The bishop told me, when he bade me farewell, that I should be able to put my ideas into practice in the Torwald—in order to convince myself that they are worthless, I suppose. As if St Mary's were just good enough for experimenting on! My work here shall be an honest indication of my serious intentions. Sometimes, of course, I feel if only I had a printing-press instead of a pulpit and a school! But the mood passes quickly.

In hot weather I give religious instruction outside the school, under the lime-tree. The black-birds and finches may have their say too. To-day I have been speaking about the Four Last Things. They did not take much interest in Death and Judgment, but when we came to Hell, the little ones gathered closer round me, and Maria Lanzel giggled, "Where the little devils are with their horns, eh?" But for children hell is not a healthy dwelling-place for any length of time, so I proposed to speak more at length on Heaven. When I had described it to them as the home of the Blessed, where all wishes are fulfilled, I began to ask them questions as to what were their ideas

on heaven. The girls are quicker at answering than the boys. Rosalia Hueter said, "It's jolly up in heaven. The little angels dance and make music there." Agatha Brennscheit said, "In heaven one can have honey-cake and mead, as much as one likes." Johann Almbauer said, "In heaven there are birds with bright red feathers, and golden cages to put them in." Julia Schindlacher believed, "In heaven my mother is waiting for me." Alois Stangel inquired, "Do they play skittles in heaven, Father?" and Michael Ramsauer said, "When I get to heaven I shall lie down on the hay and go to sleep." But little Kunigunde Reitbauer interrupted him with, "What! he is going to sleep on the hay? Why, there's no hay in heaven—is there, Father?"

Thereupon I questioned Ulrich am Stein's little son, who was dreamily sitting apart from the rest and gazing into the hedge. "Well, Charles, and what do you think?" He started up and stammered, "Think?—think?—what do you think?" "Yes," I said, "have you ever thought what it will be like in heaven?" "Be like in heaven?" he stammered and looked at me helplessly. "Well, I never!" called Kunigunde; "he does not even know what it's like in heaven." "Do you know?" I asked her. Whereupon she replied, "In heaven it's all blue, and the people go about in white linen sheets, and carry candles

in their hands." "But you say nothing about God," I insisted. "God is not up there at all," cried Anton Achenberger in a very loud voice. "God is inside our church." And Stefan Schnabelegger said to his neighbour in a whisper, "If God's home is up in heaven, it won't be very jolly; we shall have to be praying all the time."

I really believe that this Scripture lesson was more instructive to me than to the children. For once in a way, one does without book wisdom. There is no better way of getting to know the little people than by hearing what are their ideas of heaven. Soon I will tell them something about it, although even we grown-ups know little more about it than Ulrich's little son.

5th September.

Several times I have heard the Steinfranzels spoken of. They have a little place right in the farthest corner of the Rauhgraben. Their constant cheerfulness and hospitality are known all over the place. No wood-cutter, and no herd, ever rests at Steinfranzel's house without having a cup of milk or a piece of bread offered him as refreshment. The man as well as the wife and children are always good-tempered, and have a new song or a merry jest at hand. In church I had already noticed the tall man with his little

round face and straw-coloured moustache. He always stands near the font, although there is room in the seat next to Sep the carpenter and my man Ruprecht. That's my Steinfranzel; sixty years of age, he mows grass or cuts corn all the week, and then on Sunday refuses to sit down. During my sermon I have no more attentive listener than he, and by the way his red face lengthens or broadens, I know whether my words please him or not.

Now the shepherd of Griessealm told the tobacconist that when he last stopped at the Steinfranzels' house something strange had struck him. The people were kind, but offered him neither bread, nor milk, nor anything else, and the children did not look as well as usual. But when he asked the woman how things were going, she just sighed and answered in a low-spirited way that she supposed it was all right.

As to-day was a fine day for walking, I went to Rauhgraben. It is two hours' distance from Oberschuttbach. Even at mid-day there is scarcely any sun in the place. A brook whirls and foams along between its rocky banks. The road leads up the slopes and winds ruggedly to right and left of the banks. The bridges consist only of two tree-trunks lying side by side, and generally without a rail. Storms must rage heavily in these gorges. There are more trees

lying and hanging than standing on the slopes, and many a gnarled and monster fir-tree lies across the brook, boring its branches into the banks or yielding them to the mercy of the foamy waves. Then one reaches a charcoal-kiln. From here the charcoal is carried in broad baskets to the blacksmith, and he gives corn and tools in exchange, so that the charcoal-burner can keep himself and fell fresh trees for burning. Further along, the gorge broadens out into a valley. There are a few small huts, and the last of them, close up to the steep edge of the forest, belongs to Steinfranzel.

On the common land two half-grown boys were raking cut fodder ; farther up a girl was gathering wood ; at the corner of the house a boy of two years old was gnawing at a turnip. When I entered the house, I saw the woman, who had one child at her breast and was knitting socks for her eldest, while her youngest was having its meal.

She rose when I entered, and said softly—"Is it you or is it not you? Why, we ought to write that up in the chimney if it is really you, Father."

"Write it up, my good woman," I said. "I have come to see how you are all getting on here in the Almighty's special spare room."

She invited me to sit down on the bench, which

she dusted over first with her apron. Then she laid the child down on the broad bed that stood behind the stove, and hurried out. The little one began to cry, but I tried to prove to it by kind words that I was altogether harmless. I heard the woman rushing about in the next room, then in the kitchen, and then in the loft, and at last she appeared with a wooden plate on which was bread and cheese. The cheese had crumbled into a greenish mass, the bread was cracked and mouldy.

"It is a shame and a disgrace," she cried, in long-drawn-out accents—"just to-day, when I have nothing—no, nothing in the house."

Her pale face showed almost signs of terror and despair that she had nothing else to offer, and yet the best that the house contained was now on the table. Then I learned that they have nine children, five of whom are already able to go to work. The old man and the boys were up in the gorge. But she kept returning to the fact that she had nothing better to offer, and that she was terribly ashamed.

I was secretly ashamed of having brought nothing with me, as I had some idea of how matters stood. I soon discovered what had happened. The field and meadows had been choked with stones and rubbish at the time of the avalanche. Instead of their being able to

sow and reap this year, they had to clear the mischief off their ground. The old man and two boys were in the act of rolling away a fallen boulder with the help of handspikes. They caught sight of me, tore their caps off their heads, and when they heard my lament at their misfortune, the man cried, laughing—"Our little stonehouse does not bear its name in vain. Come and have a rest." He threw his coat across the boulder, which is the drawing-room sofa for the mountain folks. Afterwards I began to scold Franzel for having kept his misfortunes such a secret. "What good would it have done to tell about it?" he replied; "everyone has his own trials. My boys are fine fellows! They'll get done with it in a year or two!"

"It's all right to help oneself, of course, Franzel, but what do you intend to eat next winter?"

He pointed with his arms. "Down there is a little turnip-field. Up there on the common we have planted potatoes, and up on the slope, and behind there on the turf, too. They'll be ready in a few weeks now, and then"— He smacked his lips.

Then he went down to the house with me, and the more the woman was ashamed of the poor food she had to offer, the more Franzel praised the tasty cheese and the stale bread,

which he said was so much better than new, and straightway began to eat with smacking lips. When we talked about all the children, of which the Almighty is not at all sparing in the Rauhgraben, we considered what was to be done, and five minutes later came to the following conclusion :—I was to take one of them with me at once and educate it. Not one of the elder ones—they were already able to work ; not one of the younger either—they belong to their mother, but one of the middle ones for the rectory ; and the middle one is the little girl of ten, who was picking up wood on the slope. I know the child from school, for she used to go there in the spring. They called her at once. The old man danced up to the little girl, clapped his hands and cried—“Pastor’s cook, little pastor’s cook. Go and kiss his hand. You are in heaven already.”

The girl—Otilie by name—was overjoyed at the thought of going out with me to great St Mary’s, where all the fine houses and the church are, and of staying there and helping Mother Regina, and of sleeping in her own bed at night. Franzel’s wife never left off exclaiming—“Just to think that she should have such luck ! I could not bear to trust my child to anyone else, and even if we had to eat sawdust, I couldn’t freely part with a child of my own blood ; but to your

Reverence—with a thousand welcomes ! And if I only had something to put before you ! ”

And then the packing had to be done. All her things found room in a basket, in which little Otilie generally carried home the wood and fodder. Only a pair of shoes she carried over her arm. All her brothers and sisters were present at the farewell, and amongst them a small fair-haired boy, who stood with his bare feet wide apart, with his hands in his pockets, and looked me sharply up and down, from my broad felt hat to my top-boots, as if he wanted to find out whether I were the sort of man to whom Otilie might be entrusted.

“ You ought to take him too, Father,” said old Franzel, and gave the eleven-year-old boy a pat on the shoulder. “ He is always reading Mass in the gorge. I have often taken him by the ears for it too. But he won’t leave it alone.”

“ It’s no use taking him by the ears. Let him study,” was my advice, and as I gave it, I already half-guessed the answer.

“ Let him study indeed ! ” cried the old man, rubbing his thumb and first finger against each other.

“ We’ll talk about it, Franzel,” I said, and endeavoured to get away, to keep the woman from breaking off the bargain, for she was shedding copious tears.

On the way we had a fine conversation. Otilie told me, among others, how many things they had at home—ever so many things. They had sheep and a white lamb that her brother Lucian always put on his head and walked about with as if it were a fur cap. They had had two goats and a ram, and a clothes-chest on which flowers were painted, and a yellow bird. They had a spotted cat, and it had young ones, and her brother Martel wanted to throw them into the brook, but the mother said: How would you have liked it, Martel, if we had thrown you into the brook when you were little? Animals like to live too.” And then the kittens drank milk out of a saucer. The further we got out of the gorge, the more the child was full of home affairs. When we came to a very narrow bridge she would not go across, and stretched out her little hand for me to guide her.

Towards evening we reached the rectory. I stood up against the kitchen-door and hid Otilie behind me. “Regina,” I called inside, “to-day you will praise me. I have brought you something. I caught it in the Rauhgraben.”

“Is it a deer?” she cried. “If it is, I shall drive it away. Such creatures belong to forests and not houses.”

“It is something else, Regina, but it bites.”

“Well, do tell me, Father.”

"But you must give it cherry-cake or something else to eat."

In the meantime the little one with her blue eyes had looked out from behind me. She was recognised at once, for between school-hours she had helped Regina in the kitchen or to look for eggs when the hens had laid them in out-of-the-way places, and if anyone was able to find them, it was Otilie. And therefore Regina had always liked the clever and willing little maid, and was not a little pleased when I told her that the girl would have her home in the rectory under my care and her supervision, so that there might be another Regina some day. And then came the cherry-cake too!

I am content with this day. God knows what would have become of the pretty child out there in the wilderness. Franzel has more than enough young ones in his nest. They certainly do not cause him much care, for he leaves the care to Him who clothes the flowers and feeds the birds.

And I have suddenly become a father! I feel warm at heart.

13th September.

Now I know it. I know more about my predecessor than anyone else in the world. O God in heaven, what an awful fate!

In the evening of the Feast of our Lady, when

I was saying my prayers amid the peaceful rest of an early autumn night, my elbows must have pressed hard upon the desk. It creaked under them, and something inside gave a crack. A little board was loosened, and by the light of my candle I saw a secret drawer containing writings.

He has kept the seal of God unbroken. I am not the confessor in this case, and therefore I may not break it either. So I read this, my predecessor's manuscript, and did not close my eyes all night after it. He wanted to burn it, but was called off too soon. I will lay it in my diary.

[The publisher is in the position to print Pastor Steinberger's MS. as follows :—]

THE SEAL OF GOD.

FOR nineteen years I had not seen the county-town, not since the completion of my studies, so I was glad to have the opportunity of going there once again. There was nothing in my small parish to prevent me, the old man of the mountains, from playing the city gentleman for three days. A niece of mine was marrying a merchant, and wanted me, her uncle, to perform the marriage service. After the wedding the young couple went away, and I remained alone. I have not many acquaintances in the town, and those few I did not wish to look up. A country

pastor changes in time and does not fit in with the town folk, though that does not matter very much. So I thought to myself that I would have a stroll and a look round, and drive home after that. But a fox runs farther in five minutes than I walked the whole of that day. It was pouring in torrents. Was I to go into a public-house or a coffee-house? Neither was exactly the thing for me. Then I saw people crowding into a large building. I asked someone what it was, for I could see that it was not a church. He told me that those were the Law Courts, and that there was an interesting case on. So I thought I would go in too, to pass the time until the train started. Did the thought come from God, or was it my own presumption and curiosity? Surely one ought not to look upon the process of judgment as a means of whiling away the time and a comedy!

When I was once inside, I pressed forward as far as the railings. In front there were two men with black plumes in their helmets and long knives, and between them stood the culprit, with folded hands. He too had come down from the mountains, I noticed by his coarse woollen coat; otherwise I did not know him. I felt sorry for him at once, he looked so broken-down. His face was almost like that of a dead man, it showed drops of sweat, too. Only his eyes seemed still

alive, and they gazed around as if seeking help. He was quite a young man still, and yet this hour was to decide his life. The judges read and then they spoke, and then they read again and accused the man of having murdered an old woman for her money. He denied it, but it was no good—there was strong evidence. He had been seen on the same evening—it was Easter Eve—going with his saw to the old peasant woman's cottage, and no one saw him come back that night. In the morning, someone who was going to church looked in at her window to ask if she were going too, and saw her lying in the middle of a pool of blood. She had been murdered with a blunt instrument, they proved, and a blue handkerchief lay beside her ; it was also steeped in blood. It belonged to Tobias Steger—that is the name of the accused—and his prayer-book was found in the house as well. He was called out of church, straight from the Mass. Traces of blood were found on his working-clothes. He denied it for all he was worth, said he had had nose-bleeding, and that the old woman did his washing and mended his clothes for him, and that was why he went to her, and that was why the handkerchief was there, and the prayer-book that contained the money he was going to pay her ; he had probably forgotten it and left it lying on the table. When he was asked how long he had been in the cottage

that night, he said a quarter of an hour, or it might have been a little longer, he could not say exactly. He said she had been counting the shirts and handkerchiefs and socks, and had been chatting the while about the present-day vanity of women, who are wearing silk aprons. Then he was asked where he went when he left the cottage, as he had not gone home. He said he went up the mountain to see the Easter bonfire. But he was told many people had been up at the bonfires, and not one of them had seen him, and he was unable to give a satisfactory account of where he had spent the night. When they searched his box they found old silver coins. He said he had them from his dead grandmother. And there was a silver necklace that was recognised as belonging to the old woman. But of this necklace, Tobias Steger said that one of the links was broken, and the old woman had asked him to repair it. So he talked himself out of it all, and asked why he, an innocent man, was being robbed of his good name. And afterwards he wept so bitterly, that it would have melted the heart of a stone. But it was all in vain. No one else was suspected, and there was so much evidence against him that I could only think to myself—"If the poor man would only for God's sake repent and confess!"

And finally when the judges and the public prosecutor proved him guilty beyond a doubt, he

sat quite still in abject misery. He confessed nothing. I was terrified, and I almost asked God in His mercy to make him confess his guilt. The jury grew restless and were preparing the verdict. Then I heard names mentioned again, and among others that of the murdered woman. It was Maria Schmulbacher in Schwarzaeu. I knew the name, but how? Maria Schmulbacher in Schwarzaeu! Merciful Jesus! . . . And a sudden recollection came to me, that ought to have been dead, dead for all eternity.

Some three or four months ago, on the eve of Ascension Day, a man came to my confessional. He was agitated and troubled, and confided to me that he had murdered the woman in Schwarzaeu. I had already heard of the murder. The man who was kneeling before me was a distant relative of hers on his father's side, and he owed the woman three hundred florins. He had hard work to earn his daily bread, and she had received many benefits from his father, to whom the money really belonged. But she was going to sue him for the money. On Easter Eve, as he passed her cottage, when he was coming from the woods, it suddenly occurred to him: "She is alone, go in and pay her." He said he had done it with the back of his hatchet—he himself could not say how God's mercy had so suddenly forsaken him—and he prayed most heartily for penance and absolution,

as he was terribly afraid, and wished to be reconciled to God.

Then, of course, I told him that there could be no question of absolution until he gave himself up to the hands of the Law. I put before him the dread judgment that would await him in the next world, but he rose and went away. A few days later I heard that Hoisel, the wood-cutter, was looking very sick and miserable. I was going up to see him and entreat him to do his duty. But he had disappeared, and no one knew where he had gone to.

And that came back to my mind with all the terror of the Judgment Day!

The judges and the jury had already left the room, and in a few moments they would return and condemn this man Tobias to death—and I knew that he had not committed the murder! Then I jumped over the railings. The servant tried to keep me back, but I said I must see the gentlemen, as it was a matter of life and death.

I was rushing along a narrow passage, when I suddenly came to myself and remembered. I am a priest—the secret had been entrusted to me as confessor. My hand was on the handle of the door of the judges' room, but I fell back as if someone had struck me in the face. The seal of confession! . . .

In headlong flight I rushed down the stairs and

to the station. A train was signalled. I did not ask where it was going to, I jumped in and it started. The seal of confession! Whosoever has knelt before you in the confessional, whatsoever he has confessed to you, it concerns you not at all. You know nothing about it, you may know nothing. It has not been confessed to you, who are but an erring mortal. It has been confessed to the Eternal and Divine Trinity. God has heard it. He knows innocence and guilt. He is all-mighty to save the innocent. Man shall not interfere.

Thus I sought to calm myself, but again and again I saw that poor, pale man, standing before his judges. He could not prove his innocence. They looked upon him as guilty. They could not know otherwise, but I knew, and I must be silent as the grave. Next to me in the carriage sat a woman with two merry, playing children. The little three-year-old girl came up to me and laid her hands upon my knee. She looked at me with large bright eyes, and I wanted to smile back at her; but I was not a man at all—I was a grave. God Almighty! Will not graves open one day at Thy command? Is it not Thy Will, that innocence shall be triumphant?—and may I not be the instrument of Thy Will?

And at that very moment perhaps the verdict was being pronounced, the miserable wretch, sur-

rounded by the force of erring men, was going to the gallows. And his last thought, the last cry of his heart in this life, was one of despair, or perhaps blasphemy of a just God. And I, who knew it, and might have prevented the judge from being a murderer, was riding through the fair, flowering country, as if it had nothing to do with me.

And as I realised it, I jumped up to pull the danger-signal. Was not a human life in danger? But there was none. I no longer knew what I was doing. I tore open the door and rushed out on to the step. I heard the woman's cry of fear, and then I was lying in the sand.

When I came to myself again, I could only see the last carriage of the train in the distance. I thought it was waiting to take me on, and I rushed over the dyke towards the town. The people stood still in the streets, and may have thought—"What is the matter with the priest?"

When I reached the Law Courts, the people were pouring out with the greatest satisfaction: he had been condemned—condemned to the gallows!

I pressed forward and up the stairs. On the stairs I met them, and he was in their midst. He was not weeping, his mouth was not moving, and his face was as rigid as the heavy fetters on his hands.

I rushed up to him. "You are innocent. Do not despair, I will help you!" He started, his knees bent under him, but I had no time for him. I rushed on to the judges. They thought their day's work was done, and were just taking their overcoats from the pegs.

"Gentlemen," I cried, "you have not done yet. All is not yet over." I could not say more. They offered me a chair, and asked me what I meant. I could not speak, I could only repeat over and over again—"He is innocent!"

They asked me how I knew it, and what evidence I could give. I said that I had already told too much, and could do nothing more. Then it was a question of something that had been told me in confession?

I covered my face with my hands, wishing that I had never come. But when I tried to go, they kept me back, and wiped the perspiration off my brow, and questioned me, and I had to keep silence.

But now I must entrust it to paper, because I cannot bear it any longer, and then I must burn it—burn it like a poor soul in purgatory.

The following was the final decision of the court at the time:—They said that the priestly seal of confession, since it was apparently a question of such, was inviolable. But the judicial sentence that had been passed was inviolable also.

The evidence of guilt admitted of no doubt. The sawyer, Tobias Steger, had been declared guilty by a unanimous jury. But perhaps the royal favour would change the death penalty into penal servitude for life. If there were any possibility of contradicting the proofs of guilt, no doubt it would be done in time.

It was a harsh decree. And yet I felt comforted as I left the house. I begged for permission to go into the prison, and there I tried to comfort the poor sinner, and told him that I was convinced of his innocence, and should never rest until I had brought it to the light of day. In the meantime he would have to patiently endure his hard fate, atoning for other sins thereby, such as all mortals are guilty of.

"Yes, I am innocent indeed," he cried, "but I never thought that I should have such consolation in my saddest hour."

He seemed to be a warm-hearted fellow. If he were a married man—O God, how cruel fate is!

Then I went home. My people wondered how one could return from a wedding in such a bad humour. I never forgot the matter for a moment, and heard, too, that the case was being newly investigated. But nothing resulted from it except the repetition of facts already known. Also it was proved that, in contradiction of his own evidence, Tobias had not been on the mountain

watching the bonfires nor in his house on that night of Easter Eve. Driven to extremities, he confessed that a young woman could give evidence as to where he had spent the night. But he did not give her name.

I began to make enquiries after Hoisel the wood-cutter about this time. A cattle-dealer was reported to have seen him out at Liesgau, working on the railway. I wanted to go there ; but in the meantime the smallpox broke out in the Torwald and I could not leave, and one day I read in the weekly paper, that is sometimes sent me from the monastery, that the sentence of death that had been pronounced on the murderer, Tobias Steger, had remained unchanged. His Majesty had given Justice a free hand. And the people were saying all the while that it served the hardened sinner right, and that the severity was quite justified by the many murders that always follow upon a reprieve.

I wandered about for a whole day as if lost. The people shook their heads and said they could not understand what was wrong with the pastor.

Then I wrote a letter to the civil courts. In the name of God and of Justice I entreated them not to put the sentence on Tobias Steger into execution, but to wait until the proofs of his innocence could be brought forward—I myself would take them. I would offer myself instead

of Steger. I do not know whether the letter reached its destination. I did not receive an answer. Or ought I to have gone myself? But what is the use, if I am forced to keep silence. And if I reveal it I am no longer a priest, and my evidence is like that of another man, and is of no use because it proves nothing. There is nothing left for me to do but to find Hoisel and to prevail upon him to give himself up. I will write to the court once more, I will ask for a fortnight's respite ; and in the meantime I must go on my journey.

I shall never forget that journey. I disguised myself, so that I looked like a schoolmaster away on holiday. And I told my parishioners that I was going to pay a visit to relations during the fine autumn weather. Of course, Regina asked me where those relations had suddenly sprung from. I am very clumsy, and folks shook their heads again. But I started in God's name!

The weather was beautiful and the country was beautiful, but what was the good of it all while I was bearing that terrible burden ! The first night I lodged at the house of my colleague in Haslau. We chatted about all manner of things, and he must have noticed that I was worried, for he suddenly took me by the hand and said—"Yes, my friend, ours is a hard life." And that was all.

On the evening of the second day I reached Liesgau, where they are building the railway. They are turning the whole district inside out, as one might do an old coat. Everywhere were people with spades and pickaxes, and carts and wheelbarrows, and there were powder explosions everywhere as if it were Easter Sunday. I went up to the workmen, but I could not find Hoisel. Upon my enquiry they directed me to a woman. They said she had been living with him, and perhaps she would know something about him. She was a tall, red-haired creature, not bad-looking, with a voice like a man. When I enquired after Hoisel, or Mathias Spatzel, as he is really called, she laughed, and said if he had not hanged himself he had probably gone into a monastery. He had been on the railway for a few weeks, and she had kept to him because he had money. But when the money was spent she had wanted to exchange him for another man who could afford to keep her. But no other woman would have anything to do with such an odd fellow as Spatzel. He used to have fits of praying and kneeling down in front of every wayside cross, and at last he disappeared. She said she knew nothing more, and she would only take a praying-brother like myself as a makeshift until someone better turned up. But in some ways Hoisel had not been so bad. I had no reason to

complain of want of honesty in that woman. She was an awful creature!

So there I was again and did not know where to go next. My hair almost stood on end among those workmen on the railway. A village priest among his peasants knows nothing. I really needed that night I had to spend in the workmen's shed. Not until I left the district behind me and was going towards the mountains where peasants and herdsmen live, did I begin to feel more at ease. And on that road I found a trace of Hoisel. It took me down the mountain to the place of pilgrimage called the Holy Well.

In a village inn where I took shelter for the night the weekly paper was lying on the table. I had not the courage to look at it, fearing that it might contain the news of the execution. I asked for pen and paper, and wrote to Tobias Steger, entreating him for God's sake not to despair, and telling him that there was someone doing his utmost day and night to save him. And yet, when I have really found Hoisel, will he go with me? Will he confess his guilt to the court? I can only trust in God!

In the same inn I obtained further news. Some pilgrims came in. They were on their way home from the little church of grace at the Holy Well, that stands three hours off at the top of a mountain gorge. There a hermit had just settled down.

He performed the duties of a verger, lived on the kindly offerings of the pilgrims, slept on a cold stone, and performed deeds of penance worthy of a saint. The landlord even knew the man's name, as the church stands on his land, and he himself had provided the man with the office. Of course it was Mathias Spatzel.

I had often heard of the little church of the Holy Well. Once a year there is a festival there, and many people come together from near and far. And priests come, too, to hear confessions. It is famous as a place of confession, and it is said that every priest can absolve from every sin at the Holy Well, and that no sinner has ever left the place of grace without absolution. But if it did happen, the man to whom it occurred would keep it a secret. This legend accounts for the crowd that comes to the festival. At other times there is no priest attached to the church, but there are nearly always pilgrims. They go to pray and wash themselves in the waterfall, give a few pence, and go home again comforted.

Well, there he was supposed to be, so I went up. The country grew quite wild, and looked terrifying between the walls of rock. But it was no use growing giddy, for one had to follow chamois tracks. At last, round a sharp bend in the rock, one could hear a rush of water from the

gorge. Black and steep it towered above. Then there was a cool breeze, and a snow-white waterfall leapt down its sides. Many a little fir-tree clung to the mountain's side, that it might not lose its hold and fall in. On the plateau, close to the great waterfall, there is room for half a hundred people, and there too, built on to the wall of rock, stands the little church. It is built partly of red bricks and partly of boards that have been painted red. It has a little pointed belfry with a bell inside. On one side of the gorge stands a hut made of rough tree-trunks and bark and covered with twigs. Such is the place that may certainly appear to Hoisel preferable to a cell, or even worse.

Several confessionals leaned close up against the rocks in the open. One of them was so close to the waterfall that it was quite wet. Here, certainly, a man might confess his innermost sins as loud as he liked, and only God would hear. Would that many another priest had his confessional so close to the waterfall!

I looked round this awful place for some time, but I saw no one, and the evening was coming on. At first I thought the church door was locked, but it was half-open and I entered. Above the very simple altar there was an image in a niche. It was so rudely carved, that I could not make out what saint it was to represent. Then behind

the door I noticed another altar, with an old picture of the Mother of God. Two candles were burning on it, and a man was kneeling in front of it, who had turned his back to me and did not see me. Because his head was bent and his hands clasped, I thought at first that he was praying, but soon I noticed that he was counting some coppers in his hands. It was indeed Hoisel from the forest of Haselbach. He was wild, shaggy and brown, but I recognised him at once. When he saw me, he hurriedly hid his coppers in his bag, and after crossing himself, as if he had just finished his prayers, he rose. When I called him by his name, he recognised me and started. I pretended not to know him, but spoke of the difficulties of the way, and asked him whether I could find shelter for the night. He did not give me a definite answer, but kept looking at me and wondering whether I really was the man or not. He said I was very like the priest of the Torwald, and that he would be pleased to give me his bed, if it were not too poor for me, as he had to go down into the valley that very evening to get a few things for the next Sunday.

As he was in such a hurry to get off, I had to come to the point at once.

"Mathias," I said, "we are old acquaintances, and must have a talk together."

And when I had got him to sit down on the

step beside me, I told him that it was only on his account I had come, and that he could probably guess why, and need not be afraid.

"I don't know why," was his answer.

"But, man, surely you are not going to deny to-day what you once confessed to me. You know very well that I may not reveal anything, otherwise you would probably have had another visitor instead of me."

Then I tried to get at him, but he was wily enough to know that there is a difference whether such a matter is talked about in or out of the confessional.

"But surely you know, Hoisel, that another man has been arrested for the murder?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"And do you know that he has been condemned to death, and will be hanged quite shortly?"

That had its effect upon him. "Jesus! Jesus!" he cried and sprang up. "I know everything. I never have a single peaceful hour. I try to pray and do penance. But it's no good. Must I despair?"

He rushed to the precipice; I hurried after him.

"O my God!" he groaned, "this dread of death. And hell—the hellishness of hell! I will rather go to court."

When he was sincere again I liked him better. I took him by the hand ; it was as cold as ice.

“ Mathias,” I said, “the other man is good, and still a young man. I have been to him. It is heartrending to see his suffering at the thought of dying in disgrace. But I can tell you this : he is not suffering as much as you are. His suffering is that of purgatory, but yours is hell, which has begun on earth for you, and will never end, not to all eternity. But take courage. You can mend matters yet. It will be like getting from fire into cooling oil, when once you free your conscience, denounce yourself of your own accord, and set free the innocent man. That also is a work of redemption, Mathias, and God will reward you, and people will say : ‘ At the bottom of his heart, Hoisel is not so bad after all.’ But you must be quick about it ; to-morrow will be too late, I tell you : not too late for Steger—he will be in heaven—but too late for you. The murdered man will always be with you until the last day.” And as the rocky peaks were just gleaming down into the evening twilight like red glowing steel, I added—“ See, man, creation itself bears witness to what you have done and are carrying about in secret. Behold it raising its fiery finger to swear that you will be judged by God ! ”

Then he began to sob and cover his face with his hands.

"To think God could so forsake me!" he groaned. "I did not mean to do it. I to accuse myself of murdering the woman! And the devil himself put the billet in my hand. . . . You don't know what I have suffered since then, Father. Two or three times I have been on the way to give myself up to the Law. But I can't, I can't. Those awful gallows!"

I pretended to make light of it and said—"They will certainly not hang you, if you denounce yourself—I am sure of that; and then, it may perhaps be only sentenced as homicide; one never can tell. You will be imprisoned, you will work and do penance, and your conscience will be at ease, and God will be good to you. No, my poor Mathias, do not go down from the temporal to the eternal pains of hell."

I tried to persuade him, but he sprang up like a monster and said—"What is the use of chattering like this, Father?—it's no use, it's no use."

Then I fell on my knees before him and adjured him to think of his parents and of all his dear departed. That softened him again, and he shook his head. He gazed around, and I saw that he was going to run away. And then I played my last trump, which I had hoped I should be able to dispense with.

"Then it's all no good, Mathias?" I said—"and yet I wanted to be a good friend to you. So

listen to the rest of my information. Everything is known about you. They are coming to take you prisoner, and in a very short time they will be here. You will not escape them, and then your life is lost. Man, I entreat you for your life's sake and your eternal salvation! With difficulty I have run ahead to tell you all and to beg you to surrender yourself of your own free will, and you are then practically saved."

This untruth had a powerful effect. He began to tremble, and begged me not to forsake him. He said he would go with me, and I was to bear witness that he was going of his own free will.

Then he put out the candles in front of the picture of the Virgin, and he cried to it—"Our Lady, pray for me. Thou knowest how much I have done for thy glory. Good-night, Mother. If it turns out well, I will not grudge thee my thanks."

Then we went down by moonlight; we went on and on without ever stopping. We neither of us grew weary, and Hoisel was quite cheerful at times, and guided me with all care when the path was dangerous. "That was God's doing," I thought to myself.

Several times he said—"If they only don't catch us before we get there! How much farther is it?"

At day-dawn we reached Liesgau, and we

rested for half an hour in an inn. "If the railway were only completed," I thought; "on foot we cannot reach the county-town before to-morrow at midday."

"They will catch us before we get there," Hoisel kept repeating.

We walked all day on the hot road. I was terrified lest he should repent and run away. But the fear of being caught, and the then inevitable gallows, kept him close to my side. And if it must be a lie that saves Steger, one can only say again in this case—God's decrees are inscrutable.

In the evening of the same day, we went into a large inn, with a mill standing between high mountains. At supper, I saw the weekly paper lying on the table, and it contained the news—

"On the 30th September, at six o'clock in the morning, the execution of the murderer, Tobias Steger, will take place in the courtyard of the county prison."

The 30th of September! That is to-morrow! To-morrow morning at six!

I hastened to the landlord. "Can I get a carriage here to take us to the county town?"

"Yes, but must it be this very moment? The horses have been in the fields at work all day, and must have some rest."

"That's no good. Harness them at once. And how long does it take to reach the town?"

Well, the landlord said the road was bad, up and down hill. No one had ever taken less than nine hours. "Sir," I said, "we must be there in eight, in seven, and at all cost. A human life is at stake," and I whispered to him as much as I dared.

The landlord looked at me somewhat doubtfully then. But his wife comes from Alpengzell, and she recognised me as the priest of St Mary's ; so the harnessing was done with all haste. It was about half-past ten at night.

O ! that night—that drive ! Never have I spent such a night of agony in all my life ! Six o'clock ! And they are punctual, and the devil hastens on the hands.

At two o'clock we reached an inn. The coachman wanted to rest and said we were eight minutes ahead of time. But I told him to go on. I was gaining courage as we went on. Hoisel was silent and sat with folded hands. Was he sleeping or praying ? He was leaning back, he had never driven so grandly in his life before.

I covered the window with my cloak ; I could not bear to see the dawn. My temples were throbbing, my head was splitting. Tobias Steger could be in no greater state of terror than I was. Day dawned. The carriage was crossing over a long bridge. Here is the river ! We were nearing our destination. I tore open the window.

That great building in the morning light was the prison. We had to drive through an avenue. . . . Suddenly Hoisel jumped out—out, and away over the fields. I went out after him, caught him up at the water. He screamed, “I can’t do it,” and then fell to the ground, fainting. I took him on my shoulder and rushed on. The outer gate was open. People were hurrying in and out, soldiers, officers, men in frockcoats. I rushed into the courtyard with my burden. The clock on the small tower pointed to 6.15. . . .

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This, the record of my predecessor, Johannes Steinberger. There are a few more pages, but they are disordered and confused. He speaks of the night drive, and tells how the carriage broke down, and how they rode on, Hoisel on a white horse, and the priest on a black one. On towards the gallows, and then there were shouts of, “Murderers in priests’ clothes. He knew the man was innocent and let him be hanged.”

Rest in peace, thou poor, faithful Johannes !

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Of course I went to the monastery to lay the manuscript before the abbot. What I had heard at the Holy Well was not under the seal of God. But his Reverence does not think much can be done. The law would attach little importance to the writings of an unfortunate lunatic. Besides,

Steger is dead, and the court would not care to unearth the case again.

Of course, what the people, and especially Regina, tell of the priest's latter days, cannot be explained except as madness. But who would not go mad with such a fate! The case has actually been tried and the execution took place exactly on the 30th September of the corresponding year, and all that is related in Steinberger's manuscript of Hoisel the wood-cutter applies to the description of the man who is still free. The abbot says he will engage him to chop firewood, and will try to sound him then.

30th November.

It is as the abbot said. The court refuses to take up the case again through the discovery of the manuscript. The priest was proved to be insane, and no one remembers to have seen anyone, carrying a fainting man, enter the Law Courts after the execution, as mentioned in the manuscript.

Some time ago, Mathias Spatzel was at the monastery as a labourer. The abbot began a conversation with him, and asked him whether he had ever worked on the railway. Yes, he said, he had worked at Liesgau. Then hadn't he known Pastor Steinberger rather intimately, and hadn't he been out at the Holy Well once upon a time? He admitted that he knew the old

gentleman, but he had never in his life been at the Holy Well.

His Reverence wrote to me saying that Hoisel's answers were not such that a judicial inquiry could be made.

13th December.

The shortest days are made into the longest here. At three the people get up to thresh the oats, and Ruprecht and the blacksmith's man have to clear the church path of snow. It is snowing uninterruptedly ; from my back room on the first floor one could quite well walk straight over the snow into the forest. At six o'clock the flails are silent, the bells begin to ring, and we go up to the church for Advent service. When we come out, the day is just dawning, and the "little light" gleams down from Hohen Rauh like a golden star. It fits in with the Advent hymn : "Hail, Mary, thou bright Star of Morning !"

After school to-day the master came to me, beaming with delight. I thought he must have had a great operatic triumph, but he confided to me with a voice that quivered in its joy that he had again found three folk-songs. He said that two of them were carols, which he was going to have sung at Christmas. On my reminding him that according to the latest decree of the Consistory no German hymns must be sung at a

liturgical service, he inquired—"Then what may we sing?"

"Why, Latin ones, of course."

"What?" he exclaimed, "we German peasants in the Torwald, are to sing Latin hymns? We shepherds and wood-cutters are to sing in Latin? Did the shepherds in Bethlehem sing Latin. Did the Holy Family sing Latin?"

"They most probably sang in Latin," I said, "but the Catholic Church is to be one Shepherd, one Fold, and one Language."

Then the schoolmaster threw out his arms and cried—"If man may no longer praise God in his mother-tongue, if the faithful are to sing and pray what they do not understand, and the German has to leave his German heart at home when he goes to Mass—why it's all up with us, Father, all up!"

I made a conciliatory movement with my hand. "Nothing is as black as it is painted. There is no cathedral canon in our church either."

"And if all the members of the Consistorial Council are there as well as the bishop and the Pope himself, I am going to have German hymns at the Christmas service, begging your pardon, Father. But if we were to sing Latin ones, in a few years' time we should be singing to the empty seats. Sometimes the members of the

Council are not quite"—and he touched his forehead with his finger.

I did not agree with him in so many words. But I shook hands with him, I think.

1st January 1876.

The people say they have not had such a winter storm as the one last night for a very long time. There is a rushing like a waterfall in the bare branches of the trees, the shingles on the roof are banging, the windows are creaking, and the snow blows into every crevice. They say a stormy New Year's night means a troubled year. In church the wind rushes up against the windows that are protected by a wire grating, and it sounds as if heavy cloths were being thrown at them. At the *Tantum Ergo* the chalice almost fell from my hand. It was so icy cold that it sent a shock right through my nerves. But then came the *Sursum Corda*—"Lift up your hearts in rejoicing." And the organ began the *Te Deum*. All the candles were ablaze, the silvery clouds of incense rose, we forgot all about earthly storms. We were in heaven.

St Mary's is cut off from all the world, and yet I feel as if all the realms and periods of Christendom since the birth of the Lord were united in our church.

I thank thee, my God, for this Christmas! Not since days of my childhood has it come to me with such fervent joy, not even in St Peter's Church at Rome. The old sweet hymns in the mother-tongue are only sung aright in a village church by a congregation of devoutly faithful, and nowhere is religious feeling so deeply rooted as in the old melodies of childhood days. If this feeling is uprooted, the whole devotion of our services is destroyed.

28th February.

To-day, Monday in Carnival time, my parishioners are most wild and unruly and are rioting about in public-houses from village to village. Just as every good Christian has to hear three Masses on Christmas Day, he has to go to three public-houses on "Gluttony Monday." Everywhere is dance music, and as there are not sufficient players, Kornstock almost compromised himself. It was hard work to dissuade him from lowering the dignity of music for Carnival purposes. At first, he said that music was its very guardian angel, and made hearts purer even in the dancing-saloons. But I reminded him of the picture that hangs on the blacksmith's door, according to which a merry crowd of dressed-up men and women is following a band of musicians to hell.

“All right,” said the schoolmaster. “You gave way about the Latin hymns, so I will give way about the dance music. I will not fiddle for them.”

The Carnival masquerades are the most disagreeable of all to me. Men go about in women’s clothes, and the girls put on trousers. What they would consider unseemly and sinful for the rest of the year, they do to-day with whole-hearted fervour, as if it were a religious service. I suppose it is the heathen spirit that is still within them, and the Church must shut one if not both eyes to it. But I will leave my writing and go to the village inn.

29th February.

It was a very unpleasant night. After I had sat with the landlord of the New Inn for an hour yesterday and found things in fair order, I went to Unterschuttbach with the blacksmith. Things were in a wild state there. Hardly had we entered the inn than we were seized upon by a group of heated women, who dragged us by main force into the dancing-saloon and made us dance with them, whether we wanted to or not. It was supposed to be an honour for us. Afterwards a fellow began to sing funny songs at our expense, but it was no use taking offence at them. Hoisel the wood-cutter was there too. I felt a

cold shudder go down my back when he grinned at me and said—"Well, your Reverence, there is no such thing as sin to-day, is there? We are forgiven everything in Lent."

If this man only knew what I know—and yet do not know for certain.

In one corner, two drunken fellows were quarrelling about a girl, until the smith gave one of the brawlers his opinion of the matter in the shape of a blow straight in the face. "Now there will be a scene," I thought to myself; but no, they went quietly apart. One of them gave the blacksmith a look, but not a defiant one, rather a look of sadness at brawling being forbidden even at the Carnival.

While the smith was restoring law and order in Unterschuttbach, there was brawling to the knife in Oberschuttbach, and one young man was nearly killed. As they were driving him off in a sledge to-day, it turned out to be the blacksmith's servant-girl, who has broken her leg and two of her teeth. I said to her :—"Now, you pert young woman, I suppose you will admit that breeches are more dangerous wear than petticoats."

20th March.

Wild as the people were at Carnival time, they have now quite settled down again to work and order. They observe the commandment of the

forty days' fast quite literally. They give up all meat, and do not take full meals every day. What they save thereby they give to the cottagers who are poorly off.

Ottilie is a good girl in this way too. Not only in Lent she leaves some of her dinner, and then asks Regina if she may send home what she has left over. She still speaks of the stone house as "home," although I think the rectory has become quite a home to her. She is an orderly and industrious girl. I see it by the way she tidies my rooms and puts every chair, every book and every sheet of paper exactly in the right place. Never a word of rebuke is necessary, and at the same time the child is bright and intelligent. If she were ten years older, and I were twenty years younger, there would be more material for a godless play like the *Priest of Kirchfeld*, which is still so much talked about.

Ottilie has hummed and trilled so long while attending to the chickens and geese in the yard, that Kornstock has come to say the girl must go into the choir. And now she sings very sweetly at Mass, and when I tell her at home that she has done well, she blushes.

22nd March.

Not until to-day have I written to ask the abbot whether we might send him a boy from the

Torwald for his seminary, who is the child of poor good folks. A dreamy boy, who has passed through the village school, and since then delivers sermons from the mountains and reads Masses in rocky niches. Perhaps the people of the Torwald may yet have one of their own folks as priest one day.

27th May.

One farm in Oberschuttbach is called the Gral. The woman who lives there is ninety-nine years old ; she is the oldest person in the parish. As I did not see her in church last Sunday, I went up to-day.

Her son, the old long-bearded Gral farmer, stood in the middle of the room. In front of him on a three-legged stool sat a half-grown boy, whose long untidy black hair he was cutting. I inquired after his old mother, and heard she was not at home, but in the herb-field.

“That’s all right,” I said, “and next year we must have grand doings when she celebrates her hundredth birthday.”

“Yes, I’m not against it, if we are alive.” He was not very successful with his hair-cutting. For one thing, the great sheep-shears bent rather than cut the matted hair, and when they did cut, they left some places quite bare and others not clipped short enough. The old man had been in the

army for twenty-one years, as he is fond of telling, but he had not learned hair-cutting. I sat down to the table and looked at the boy. He had several times given me trouble.

He was the illegitimate child of a servant-girl, had never been to school and rarely went to church. He did not like work, was inclined to run away, and therefore not a favourite. He had been entered in the register as Peter Heissel, born in 1857. He was not a bad-looking boy, except for his pug nose and his thick lips. The Gral farmer had taken him into his service a few days before, and was trying to train him properly, beginning with his hair. For Peter is to go to church to-morrow, and he must look human.

Suddenly the door opened, and a policeman entered. The boy on his stool collapsed. The policeman inquired harshly for Peter Heissel.

"There he is."

"I want him. He has committed sacrilege," said the policeman. My heart seemed to stand still. Three weeks ago he had stolen a sheep from the monastery pasture. Of course it belonged to the Alpenzell flocks, so it was sacrilege. Peter, meanwhile, with half his hair cropt and the other half like a woolly poodle, sank down on his knees, raised his hands and moaned—"Don't lock me up—please don't lock me up!" But the policeman was already putting handcuffs on the folded

hands. In answer to the inquiry, he said that he had sold the stolen sheep to a man who owned a lime-kiln, for sixty kreutzers. Where else was he to get money from? In service there was cabbage and potatoes and fleas, but no money.

But the farmers' people would not let him go as he was. The old man finished cutting off his hair, and then buried it under the roof drippings. This is an old superstition, said to prevent the person whose hair has been cut from having headaches. The hostess brought milk and bread. The policeman and Peter were to eat it all. They would have a long journey before they would get any more.

But the policeman left the farewell meal to Peter. The latter thanked the man for cutting his hair, and the woman for the milk, and as he stumbled out of the door in front of his keeper, he muttered—"Whoever betrayed me may feel pleased with himself."

When they had gone, I did not know whether to praise the farmers for their kindness or not. But in answer to some remark of mine on the subject, the Gral farmer replied—"When a man is as old as I am, and knows what happens in the world, he does not think a great deal about a sheep-stealer. When he's in the army he will get to know God."

But it was hard to see one of my parishioners arrested and led away like that.

3rd July.

Sometimes my old love of fighting comes to the fore again. But as no one quarrels with the pastor, my gall dries up. It is unbearable if one is never contradicted. Of course I have my own opinion, but sometimes I want to hear another's and a good-tempered discussion enlivens one. The schoolmaster has his eternal music, and the others have their conventional respectability, and at the same time they think and do what they choose. Many things are not as they should be.

How I do dislike Karl the tailor, when I see him fussing about the altar with the candles and the censer and the altar wine, knowing as I do that he has no faith. Of course, he will not admit it, but whoever has spoken once as he has done has a rift somewhere. Outwardly there is no complaint to be made about him, but I can no longer trust him, and the suspicious feeling of being served by an infidel sometimes worries me almost to distraction.

In this way I had accumulated many grievances, and I gave vent to them on Whitsunday. I spoke simply and they understood. But after the Amen, came a very poor "May God reward you!" I thought to myself, "If that was too sharp for you, you shall have it sharper still." On Trinity Sunday I described the dying hour of the impenitent, the horrors of the judgment and the pains of hell, and

I spoke of the hardened and impenitent members of the congregation. My fists thundered down upon the pulpit like a storm in the dog days, for I grew so excited. My listeners looked at me with a troubled and almost sullen gaze, and only one pair of eyes flashed up to mine full of satisfaction and approval. They belonged to Crooked Christl.

At Mass afterwards, Kornstock is said to have played his finest music, but my heart remained untouched that day, and so did the congregation's, I believe. Afterwards the smith gave me to understand that in the future he would have to tie a woollen shawl round his ears, as there was lately such a cold blast blowing through the church.

Sometimes I could almost shed tears in my distress. Regina talks about sending for a doctor. Are the people different this year from what they were last, when I felt so warmly towards them? Or am I different? Why this ill humour? Why fill our fair church with wrath and dissension? The hardened sinners only laugh at it, and the simple-minded are terrified, while the hypocrites feel a malicious satisfaction. I am discontented with myself, and that is why I feel so towards the others. Merciful God, send Thy Holy Spirit unto me again!

4th July.

The abbot has just written to say that Steinfranzel's boy is welcome in the seminary any day

now, and that if he behaves properly he will be cared for even after his ordination. He need not take anything with him, except what he has on. The first thing I did after the receipt of the letter was to run down the garden, tear Otilie away from the lettuce bed, hug her, kiss her, and shout at her : "Do you know, girl, that you have got a priest for a brother? It's as good as certain. To-morrow we will go to the Rauhgraben and fetch Luzian."

7th July.

Even before the end of the school year, they admitted him, so that he might see what kind of examinations he would have to pass in the following year. He is allowed to stay in the monastery over the vacation also. The intelligent, hard-headed little fellow pleases the fathers. He has a very serious look, says curtly yes or no, and knows his own mind. That's the kind of wood, says the abbot, of which the princes of the church are carved. And it must be hard wood too.

25th July.

Now there is an opportunity of showing them that the cold blast did not bring winter after all, and that I think a great deal of each one of them.

A plague has broken out in the miller's house in the lower village, and three persons died of it

in one week. Then the disease spread rapidly, so that there are sick people in many of the houses now. At Sep the carpenter's they are all in bed, and we have been forced to send helpers. The old women, that one is so fond of making fun of at other times, are very useful now. Who has the courage to approach infectious diseases, and the patience to nurse the sick in their fever-heat and pain and helplessness? The old women. Whatever we men do in the world that is great and good, at such times we can take an example by the women.

We have no doctor, and there is no call for one either. They get their medicine from the old herb woman. I have examined a few bottles of it according to my own imperfect knowledge. There does not seem to be anything harmful in them, and that at least is a great advantage. And if the brown drinks taste very bitter the people have all the more faith in them. Faith makes them happy and restores them to health. From their faith they gain patience, obedience and trust, all of which are conducive to healing. My instructions are: they must eat little, and they have no appetite either. They must not drink much water, though they are very thirsty. They require pure air and rest. I find fault with the fact that in many houses the water runs through the yard under the dung-heap. They say that it

has been so since time immemorial, and that they have not had such a plague for forty years, and that Hainz the miller, where the plague first broke out, has no dung-heaps.

I have sent for a book on health culture, and sometimes on Sunday afternoons I shall read to the people out of it. I have a great deal of difficulty with the windows in the sickrooms. They will not open the windows. Those who are lying in barns and wooden garrets with chinks between the boards, through which the wind plays as on a harp, do not matter ; but stuffy air is poison. As a matter of fact, the difference between rooms and barns is not very great ; they die or get better in either place.

We have stopped all communication between the houses. Where such is necessary it is made through the nurses, the smith or myself, if possible across a brook or over an open fire which they light for the purpose. All the sick persons want the pastor, for they are in great need of consolation. But they prefer me to prophesy that they will get well again than that they will go to heaven. Yet they almost all make their confessions with calm submission, and then receive the sacraments of the dying. There is a good deal of real Christianity without words and pretence about these people. They possess courage and charity, modesty and submission

and undoubting hope in the Kingdom of God. That is my great joy.

They have a strange custom of fetching fire from the hanging lamp before the church altar into their homes in case of death, in order to light the candles at the head of the coffin by it.

We have sent Otilie to her parents in the Rauhgraben. Everything is all right up there. One morning I woke up feverish and shivering. Regina sent for the smith at once, saying that the pastor was laid up too. The smith sent a message back—"He must not let himself be laid up. There is no time for us two to be ill." So I got up, and said several times angrily to myself—"You must not be ill, you will not be ill." Regina gave me a vapour bath, and she wrapped me up in compresses as if I were a little child. I perspired freely, and the next day all was well again.

A few days later Karl sent for me early in the morning. He was unable to ring the bell or light up in church, the sickness had seized upon him in the night. He had such a violent fit of shivering for three hours that his bed creaked, his wife said. Then he lay in fever-heat and begged for the Sacrament of the dying. When I fetched it from the altar, I said a prayer of thanksgiving that this soul had not been lost. In the meantime his neighbour, Crooked Christl, had sat down beside the sick man, and was tell-

ing him of the great probability of his going to hell, since God is so terribly just, and because so many are called for hell and so few chosen for heaven. He also told him about the hellish fiend who always lurks around the deathbeds of sinners. The sick man let him talk quite quietly, but when I came in, I was seized with a fit of righteous anger and cried—"You yourself are the wicked enemy. Get you gone!" And he went.

Karl made a very penitent confession, and then received the last sacrament piously and submissively. But my joy did not last very long.

He fell asleep, and in his feverish dreams he began to chatter about the wafer, God and priests and its being all rubbish, and so on. His wife and his children who were standing round his bed in terror, called to him—"Yes, yes," he cried, "I'm dying right enough. That means the end of all this wretchedness."

I felt as if I should sink into the ground. Apparently he was a good Catholic, but his heart knew nothing of it. I have often been too late with the Sacraments, but I have never felt so dejected at leaving a dying or a dead man as I did in the case of our verger.

28th August.

During the last two months I have buried thirty-four persons, mostly young and strong.

The peasants who have dug the graves say that the churchyard has not filled so rapidly for years. Now the plague is as good as over; it went in the same way as it came, quite without apparent cause. The people call it a dispensation, and I cannot say anything else either. The convalescents are sitting out in the open, under the ash and cherry trees, and their pale faces gaze almost devoutly into the sunlit world.

For the first time since his illness, Karl has assisted in church to-day. He has filled the censer, lit the altar candles and poured oil into the hanging lamp. . . .

And then the miserable thought occurred to me: "What, if there are more of this kind? How am I to know? By their deeds shall ye know them, saith the Lord." Of course, Karl does not do anything actually bad. Surely it cannot be true what I read in a book the other day, that in their lives and actions there is no difference between believers and unbelievers, and that religion does not make them better so much as happier. But happiness is not sufficient, only, perhaps, the happier man is also the better man. And now there are two, or even three, people in my parish that I do not understand. If Crooked Christl is an impostor, what is Karl, and how about Hoisel?

The cure of souls among the mountains and

the natural folk is not such an easy matter. They are as different as apple-blossom and hemlock, as the lamb and the fox—and yet all of them are Catholic Christians.

11th September.

Behind the Kirchenriegel, where the five old maple trees stand on a green grassy slope, Ruprecht has put up a seat and a table for me ; for I like sitting there and hearkening to the silence which is but rarely broken by the rustling of a bough, or even more rarely by a bird-call in the peaceful autumn.

As I was sitting there to-day and thinking about sundry things, Regina came tripping along from the rectory with the afternoon coffee. She makes it well ; she does not require it to come from the East. She says ours turns black too, if it is made of roasted corn. She gets the cream for it from the speckled cow, she buys the sugar for ready money, and since our canary flew away, I have his share of sugar too. First of all I enjoy the glass of liqueur that she brings also.

Regina informed me that two strange gentlemen with knapsacks and long sticks had arrived at the New Inn. They wanted to climb the Hohe Rauh in the morning, and were seeking a guide and a carrier. But there was no one to be found in the village, and people were dissuad-

ing the strangers from going up into the wilderness, where, they said, there was nothing to be found but boulders and ice—no chamois and no birds, only dead things. The strangers said they were quite aware of this, and for that very reason they wished to ascend, and they promised that the carrier should be well paid. “So I wondered,” said Regina, “whether our Ruprecht could not go. The hay is in, and the oats are not yet ripe for cutting, so he would have time to earn a little.”

Why not? As far as I know, he had frequently been up on the mountains with the chamois-hunters and knows his way about, and it will certainly do the strange gentlemen, who, no doubt come from a town, no harm to see the glory of God on the heights.

14th September.

Our mountaineers have returned to-day at dinner-time. Their clothes were dusty and torn, they were covered with perspiration, and their hats were decked with edelweiss. The gentlemen are already in bed, and Ruprecht cannot stop telling his adventures. In the first night, they slept in a cave, all three bundled together in great woollen rugs. And then these mountains—these wild mountains! Sometimes they were blocked up in rocky hollows, and it looked as if they would never get out again.

Then again they climbed up the mountain-sides like flies, or crept up through narrow chasms on hands and knees. It seemed almost impossible for any human being to climb up there at all, but Ruprecht said that when he saw how the others did it, he felt ashamed of staying behind, and so he did the same. Then they all hung together with ropes, and carried and pushed and lifted and pulled and pressed closer up against each other, and mounted on each other's shoulders, and finally they reached the top. The gentlemen said that it was a mere nothing, and that there were far worse climbs than that, but one had to be properly equipped for them ; and they wanted to crawl right through the water in the Laudamus cave, but he, Ruprecht, had refused to do it, even if they offered him the whole monastery of Alpenzell. On the top they had seen the terrible ice fixed between the rocks everywhere, as thick as a tower is high, and sometimes even thicker than that. Where it was cracked, one could see how thick it was. It was as green as glass, and the fragments were larger than the largest houses, and everywhere cracked, terribly cracked ; and when one looked down through the cracks, it was as dark as a cellar, and it was like that all the way, as far as the eye could see, and it seemed as if it would go on getting higher and wilder, on and on to all eternity. And the gentlemen had nothing

to do up there but to turn back and come down again, and there was a terrible blast up there too. The descent had been even worse than the ascent. In the second night they had been all right in the cow-keeper's hut, and the gentlemen were full of enthusiasm about the rocky mountains, and they said they ought to be much better known. And finally they had given him, namely Ruprecht, ten florins, so that he really did not know what to make of it all.

They must be a couple of those people, who go about the world nowadays, and have no other aim in life than to climb the most impossible places. I should like to go up too, but only by the easiest path. For I have no young feet, and still less wings, and I shall have to say as old Bachfriedel did, when Golo, the pond-digger, said he liked looking at the mountains best from below, "And I shall like to look at them best from above, when once I sit in heaven with God, my Father."

25th September.

School holidays. The children are taking a rest from learning by working in the fields. They are helping to bring home the sheaves of corn from the fields, the bundles of hay from the meadows, and the cabbages, turnips and potatoes from the garden. Others look after the cattle,

which are now allowed to wander about at will and browse on all that sickle and scythe have left standing in the fields. The children keep up small fires, while they are on duty minding the cattle, and they roast potatoes in them. Everywhere is singing and shouting from morning till night.

The schoolmaster is nowhere to be seen. Only in the morning he hurries breathlessly up to the church, and his excitement is noticeable in the trembling of the organ, though he tries to conceal it. His opera, *The Happy Man's Shirt*, has been returned to him, with the request to alter the first and fourth acts. After that, he is told that it will be acceptable, and may be performed. The desired alterations have been indicated, so the delighted schoolmaster is working at them for all he is worth. "That will turn out something grand, Father," he whispered to me to-day, as he hurried along.

I wish him the greatest possible, unprecedented success, and what after that? Will the celebrated composer remain schoolmaster at St Mary's, or shall we lose the music that others are to gain? Kornstock will not sell himself to the highest bidder; I know him too well for that. But ambition is a terrible thing—a cruel destroyer—especially amongst musicians. God keep and preserve us all from greed of money and from ambition! Amen.

27th October.

Holy autumn calm, eve of winter. The sky has no more clouds, nothing but vast motionless mists that fall far down the mountain-side. In the valleys the forests lie broad and black, the stubble-fields and meadows are whitened by the hoar frost. One's boots ring on the rough ruts of the field-paths, the brook has a thin crust of ice at the edge, and the well shows many a glassy spike below. In the gardens the withered herb-stalks and dry leaves of the ash and maple tree may yet be seen, and of the latter one or the other start up from time to time as if frightened. The trees themselves stand like rigid brooms. Whoever has good ears may hear the cry of a magpie at the edge of the forest, or the croak of a raven as he flutters heavily across the stubble-field. Along the gloomy mountain-slopes the edge of the mist is no longer sharply defined ; a transparent grey shroud falls deeper still, and towards evening small flakes dance around. They dance lightly hither and thither, and many a one knows not exactly whether to come down or to soar up again. The darkness deepens, the flakes fall faster and thicker, the roads and roofs grow grey, and the stubble-fields are streaked with white ; the branches of the trees show white skeletons ; one's hat has a white rim, and the flying flakes sting as they touch one's

cheeks. Winter has come. God guard thee thou green earth ! In seven or eight months I shall see thee again, or be at rest beneath thee. But it is beautiful, beautiful ! There is nothing more refreshing to the nerves than to wander amidst a whirl of falling flakes in the white winter twilight.

28th October.

The carts no longer rumble along the street. All is piled soft and high and white. One imagines that the snow has no scent, and yet the whole air is scented with snow. In the afternoon I wandered about for a time in the snowstorm. One could not see a hundred paces ahead ; one was walled in by Nature, and alone and well content in this solitude.

On my way back I looked in at Kornstock's. It would do him no harm either to have his beard and his soul brushed by the winter storm. He sits much too much alone in his hermitage, and one is much more lonely there than in the open. As his eyes are weak, he wears a green shade over them. This he raises, as he would a hat, by way of greeting when one goes in, but he apologises for never taking it off. As far as I know, he has never had any dealings with women. The crying of children is not musical, he says. An old servant keeps his house in fair order, and for dinner he goes to the inn, where he likes to sit

at a solitary table and wave his knife and fork as he would a baton. In his little sitting-room, music is as plentiful as gnats are in July. Otherwise it is not uncomfortable. He was sitting at a squeaky spinet and composing.

"Do you compose on this instrument—on this old hurdy-gurdy?"

"I hear no hurdy-gurdy. I hear the full orchestra of the Royal Opera."

"Have you ever been to the Royal Opera?"

"No, not so far; that is yet to come."

And yet he hears it. There is a great mystery about music. I remember my colleague Bernhard, with his intelligent head and his awful voice. He used to bellow half the nights through, and once he owned to me himself—"One does not hear oneself; one hears a better voice—the best that one has ever heard—render the song one is singing." Unfortunately one's next-door neighbour does not hear the best.

Then Kornstock showed me his compositions—two drawers and a box full, and great piles on the bed too. And as he was blissfully gazing at the piles, I am sure he could hear the music of them all. Then he played me a few pieces. But I heard mighty little of the orchestra at the Royal Opera, only the wheezy spinet with its rattling and snorting and piping and screeching. And this man was finding fault with our church organ a

little while ago! Why, it is a very seraph compared with this creaking cupboard of sighs, though the blacksmith has promised that it shall be repaired.

Then the master showed me a whole collection of folk-songs and the tunes to which they are sung. Many of them he has already worked out and arranged for singers. He sings and plays them with his pupils sometimes in the choir, in the open air, at weddings, or on the eve of St Simon's day—when they wish the blacksmith many happy returns of his birthday—and on other occasions. They have even sung to me, and Regina and Otilie were so moved that they wept their eyes sore. Last Michaelmas, the musicians wanted to serenade Kornstock himself, but he got wind of it and told them—"Have a little patience, my good people, and this time next year I will accept all honours and dignities you care to offer. But now I am nobody, only a poor schoolmaster, and if you come fiddling in at the front door, I shall run out at the back, I tell you that." So they left it alone.

The alteration of the opera is complete. "It is a work of art," he assures me, "a great work of art." Oh what touching self-confidence! And yet he is modesty itself. Whenever he speaks of Beethoven or Mozart or Schubert he always raises his shade. "One cannot attain to their

heights, but one may excel them," he said to me once.

As it was very cosy in his room, I asked him to tell me something about the new opera. With outstretched fingers he threw himself upon the spinet.

"No, I don't mean that, Mr Kornstock, I mean the story."

"Why, that's nothing," he burst out—"I can tell it: I expect you know it too. It's a fairy tale—'The Happy Man's Shirt.' But if I may play it to you, Father?—One can understand the words much better through the music, much better than by reading or telling—that is, of course, if the music is good."

I said I understood too little about music to be able to appreciate it.

"Very well then," he said and began, probably to avoid stuttering, to speak hurriedly, bringing out one word on top of the other. "A king—yes, there was once upon a time a king. The most celebrated doctors could not help him, and the wise man—for a wise man came from the East—found out what was the matter. 'Your Majesty,' he said, 'nothing in the wide world will be of the least use to you, except one thing, and that is a shirt: a shirt, but it must have been worn by someone who is perfectly happy—perfectly happy and has not a single wish. If you put on that shirt you will be restored to health.'"

“A dead man’s shirt?” I inquired.

“But, Father,” continued Kornstock, “don’t you really know the story? So the sick monarch called his courtiers together, and set out on a journey through his vast kingdom to find someone who was happy. He heard rumours of one and the other, who was said to be living in splendour and honour and health before all the world. But wherever the king made closer inquiries, something was wanting in every case: the man who had health had no money, the rich man was afraid of thieves, the victorious general was afraid of his foes’ revenge, and the artist was devoured by satisfied ambition. He thought that his Osmanic majesty would surely be happy. No, he had fifty beautiful wives, and just the one he loved the best had been carried off. And so there was a hitch in every case, in every single case. So the king went on and on into the mountains, and at last he also came to the Torwald. What was wrong with Kimpel the blacksmith? He had a sick calf; if only it would get better! But it died instead. So they went to Regina, good little woman that she was; surely she would be happy. But no, the hens would not lay, and even when they did, the fox stole the eggs. But surely the pastor would be happy? He had the health of sound middle-age, he was neither rich nor poor, neither master nor servant; everyone

liked him ; he would probably live a long life and go to heaven after that. But no, the pastor shook his head, and when they asked him why, he gave no reply. But there was one more—the schoolmaster Kornstock. He had a warm room and a good pastor, and was writing great operas that would soon be performed. Money and fame were at his door : the schoolmaster must be a happy man ! But the schoolmaster said he suffered from palpitations, and could not sleep a single night for the thought of all the joy that was to come. So he was discontented because he was so full of hope. To think of a foolish schoolmaster not even being content ! The king was in continual pain because he was so ill. His stomach ached because he had to eat so much, and his head ached because his crown weighed so heavily, and his chest was freezing because his heart was cold. So he said—‘ The Torwald is no good either ; let us go up higher.’ So they went to the Rauhgraben. Now you must listen, Father. Just when the water was not rushing down, there came a shout of joy down the mountain-side, a shout of joy just like a soaring rocket in the air. The king’s wise man pricked his ears : ‘ Your majesty, only a happy man shouts like that.’ So they went up as fast as they could, and found Steinfranzel making hay on the slope. It was he who was singing and jodelling. They asked him why he was so cheerful. ‘ Why

ever shouldn't I be cheerful?' he replied; 'we have got everything we want. We have work and we have food, and we have sleep, and our children—Ottilie is with the pastor, and Luzian is in the monastery, and the other ones are all right too; so whatever should be the matter with us?' Then they told him to take off his shirt. 'What, I am to take off my shirt?' said Franzel. 'I certainly shan't do that.' But they told him he should have seven bags of ducats. 'But I don't want one of them. What we want grows in the earth.' Well then he should have a castle in return for his shirt. 'God reward you,' said Franzel, 'but I have my little stone house.' And then he laughed and that was his last reply. And as he would not give it of his own free-will, the king grew very angry, and ordered the shirt to be torn off his back by main force. And when they pulled off his coarse woollen coat, he stood there quite naked, for he did not wear a shirt. And he did not even possess one, Father. So he put his coat on again and went higher up the mountain and began to shout for joy. The king was almost mad with rage, but the wise man said—'Your majesty, we have learned something after all: the really happy folks on this earth do not possess a shirt at all. They have no possessions.' So the king gave up his kingdom, and built a hut in the open country and lived among simple, unspoiled folk,

and never required a doctor after that, nor a wise man ; and if ever you meet him, Father, tell him I send him my remembrances."

That was the story Kornstock told.

"And all that is in your opera?" I cried.

"And the music too, the moaning and groaning, and the singing and rejoicing right up to the blue sky. It's a lyric opera, if you will—there is everything in it. It will be a great work, a great work!"

"Kornstock," I added, "I was touched by the pastor in your opera, but cut him out."

"I can't cut out the pastor," replied Kornstock. "He has such a splendid bass part."

"Well, I really think it will turn out something, Kornstock."

"It will, it will, Father—it certainly will. To-morrow, when the blacksmith's man drives down, I am going to send it by him."

Such earnest endeavour as this goes to one's heart. Schoolmaster, I dare not tell you, but I am afraid of the uncanny road on which you are now setting out.

9th May.

It is Ascension Day. This year the old saying is almost true, that on Ascension Day the first ears of corn ought to raise their heads to the sky. But the ears are not as full, and it seems to me

that the birds are not singing as brightly as usual. It has been a cold winter with little snow, and when the plough cut into the ground the dust flew up from the furrows. The kingcups are flowering in the lower parts of the meadows, a solid yellow mass. On Easter Monday the smith asked me to give notice in the church square that whoever had fodder left in his barns was not to sell it beyond the Ried, but rather to keep it for his own use. It ought not to be my business to give out such notices. I have enough of another kind.

Peter Heissel is back again. He is at the Gral farm in Oberschuttbach. He likes telling about his imprisonment and what the food and companions and amusements were like, and he speaks as artlessly about it as a soldier out on leave from the barracks. The Gral farmer told me to-day that he is otherwise a useful lad, but would be sure to get into mischief again before long. He asked me to have Peter up to the rectory, to try and persuade him to work hard.

The hard work would of course be to the farmer's advantage, but that is not all that is required. I went straight to the Gral farmer. I will do my best. He has been neglected from his childhood, and it is not really his fault. But perhaps if I talk to him warmly and impressively of the misery that awaits the

wicked, the advantages that fall to the lot of the good, and what blessings, honour and love are bestowed on honest and hardworking folk, I may find the way to his heart.

But when we reached the farm great excitement was reigning there. Peter had gone off again, and had stolen Toni the labourer's watch and pair of boots. Toni has already started in pursuit, armed with a heavy stick. The other people at the farm were crowding round a woman at the door. She stood in their midst, wildly waving her arms and shrieking to keep them off. She was the mother of the boy; Katherine was her name and she was a servant from Almau. She had two shirts in a bundle, the material for which she had probably bought with her savings and sewed at night. She wanted to bring them over to her son, and then she was going to ask the farmer if she might stay overnight at the farm, to be ready for the church festival next day. And then she heard all the shouting about the "ne'er-do-weel, the thief, the gaol-bird." And then they began to blame his mother, that slovenly creature, who deserved it just as little as the thieving rogue that the sun should shine down upon her.

When Katherine saw me, she broke through the crowd and fell on her knees at my feet. I had long prepared hard words for this woman because

of her son, and I had meant to tell her that socks and shirts are by no means sufficient to make up for the responsibility of bringing a child so lightly into the world. That God would judge her doubly for her sin as well as for her shameless neglect of the boy, which must needs lead him to temporal and eternal destruction. But as she lay before me, moaning, how could I be hard? How could a poor simple servant, herself hard pressed by continual work and service, have time and opportunity to educate her child? She had done what everyone else would do in her place, and had given the child to the first best person who would take him, and thanked God that he was well looked after. Heaven punishes the sins of the poor much more severely than those of the rich. Kornstock's moral of "The Happy Man's Shirt" is not always true.

I took the woman down to the rectory with me and she slept in the barn. In the evening I sent Ruprecht down into the valley to enquire after the fugitive.

"What will happen to him if they catch him?" the maid asked Regina sadly, before she went to bed. If she had been told what was going to be done, she would have probably prayed all night to her guardian angel not to let Peter be found. O mother heart, with thy holy devotion and thy blind love!

1st June.

Not a drop of rain for two months. The blacksmith advises us to plant a good many vegetables, especially potatoes, as one does not know what the corn will be like this year. In the fields there is more yellow soil than green blades to be seen. The young cabbages have all died ; the nights are cloudy or windy, so there is little dew, which is otherwise our salvation in times of drought.

Yesterday we had our Corpus Christi procession. All who can walk and many who can still be carried, came up from the valley and down from the slopes. The children and young girls wore wreaths of rosemary in their hair ; it is not the custom for them to wear white dresses. In church, the scent of roses was almost stifling. The women wore flowers at their breast, and the men wore them in their hats. The altars and pictures were wreathed with them. The picture of the Holy Mother Anne is the most sweetly adorned. Women who are expecting children are most concerned with it. If women think much of the Virgin and the Christ-child during the time of their pregnancy, the fruit of their body benefits thereby. That, too, is a kind of heredity. If a woman always sees beautiful and good pictures and people, she has beautiful and good children.

That was true of the Kreuzsteiger family. Old Kreuzsteiger and his wife are looked upon as the two ugliest people in the valley. And yet this couple have the most beautiful children in the Torwald. The people say that is because the woman prays so diligently in the chapel. In the little chapel they have a beautiful old picture of the Annunciation. And the sight of this beauty ever before her made her own children beautiful. Everything is very wonderful in this world of God's creation.

The procession went down on this side of the Kirchenriegel, round the mountain and then up again on the other side. The four Gospel altars stood at St Joseph's shrine in the wood, under the blacksmith's lime tree, the five maple trees, and beside the churchyard wall. The owners of these places have to provide these altars by bringing the table, the pictures, candlesticks and other decorations out of their own houses. They vie with one another as to who shall have the best altar. But no one comes up to the blacksmith's. He has a special carved altar, an old, by no means bad, work of art. He puts it up and decorates the place with great zeal. The worshippers are very devout during the procession, but they like to look out on to the fields sometimes, and think, perhaps, less of God than of the grass which He lets grow. It seems to them quite an understood

thing that God should be in their midst in the form of bread, and that accounts for the indifference. Karl wears his white surplice to-day, with the red cassock, and looks almost like a priest in his dignity. He swings the censer, and with the choir praises Him who "in the most Holy Sacrament is present, true God and man." Karl, if I could only turn you inside out like a glove!

2nd May.

Two gentlemen have come from Munchen to-day to the inn in the lower village. They are going to stay the summer and study the mountains. They want to bring their families for a few weeks too, if they are able to find lodgings for them. They pay well, and it is a good thing for the village. The tourist hut on the Hohe Rauh has already been begun. Masons from Italy are building the stone walls; Sep the carpenter has undertaken the roof and the fittings. The smith was offered the locksmith's work, but he refused, and said he was not a locksmith at all, only a blacksmith.

A few days ago an Alpine Club inquired whether the parish of the Torwald would agree to subscribe money or labour, if a proper road were built from the monastery to the village of St Mary's. The smith replied in his arbitrary way: "The old road is good enough for the Torwald

folks, and those who don't like it can stay outside." Since his re-election he is more than ever hard-headed. I should not myself despise a better road. But the smith said to-day—"The wind from the valley has never done the Torwald any good. The people are turning into money-grabbers. They want visitors to come and bring money. I am growing horrified."

13th May.

I feel almost incapable of writing it down. It is about Kornstock.

For the past two weeks there was nothing to be done with him, he was so excited about the forthcoming performance of his opera. During his long waiting the schoolmaster grew quite thin. He was sometimes as white as clay, and then again burning hot. I did not like his looks at all.

To-day I was down at the smith's house when the wood-carrier arrived from Alpengzell. Kornstock was standing under the blacksmith's porch, as it was raining. He wore his high black straw hat, and stood there gazing.

Said Leopold the carrier—"I have a letter for the schoolmaster. It's been in my bag since the day before yesterday, and I forgot all about it. And when the postmistress wanted the receipt to-day, I had still got the letter. So she scolded me. Well, where is he? Ah, he's over there,

but where's the letter? Supposing I've lost it after all. That would be a fine to-do. I should have to pay a fine." While Leopold was leisurely searching his pockets, Kornstock was standing beside him. I can't describe how he stood there, but I shall never forget it. "The very greatest theatrical success cannot make up for what you are suffering now, you poor man," I thought to myself.

At last the letter was found, a fine square letter with a seal. Kornstock signed the receipt upon the horse-trough. His hand shook so that his signature was almost illegible. Then he put his letter quite humbly into his bag and went off. I looked after him. He was bounding along almost like a boy.

I stood about in front of the smithy for a time, and then in front of the rectory, thinking that he would soon come with the news. But he did not appear. I began to feel uneasy about it and went over to the schoolhouse to see what he was doing. I knocked, and he called to me to come in. I opened the door and found him sitting on a low stool in the corner, crying. On the floor lay paper cuttings, and the open letter. I cast a glance at it.

"We regret the opera has been rejected by the public."

"Well, Kornstock," I said cheerfully. Then I bent down to him and stroked his long hair.

“Kornstock, what are you doing. Get up. What!—refused? Why, that has happened to others as well as yourself—even to Mozart. Come along, schoolmaster. Don’t take any notice of that stupid theatre. You have better things to do, and have done them already. You have introduced good music into the Torwald; you have rescued precious songs from being forgotten, and you lead the choir to the glory of God. My friend, there is more merit in that than in entertaining dull idlers in the town, who understand nothing and grumble instead of being grateful.” I tried to cheer him up, but he turned away and groaned in anguish. I went on—“You are too good for them. Our parish is an audience too, and a grateful and faithful one. It does not praise much, but it appreciates you all the same. The immortality of the theatre is not of long duration. Immortality amongst the people lasts longer. Get up, Kornstock, and be of good courage. They must send the opera back to you at once; they are not worthy of it. God only knows how they may have tampered with it. I am sure we could perform it much better with our young folks up here. Let us do it in the winter; you will enjoy it, I know. Come along, Kornstock, be sensible.”

He raised his head slightly and stared at me. His face seemed altogether changed.

19th May.

We have been thinking all was over with the schoolmaster. For some days he had raging fever. But at last he recovered so far that he could begin to torment himself again. He sent for all the papers in which the opera, *The Happy Man's Shirt*, is ridiculed. Yes, ridiculed. How cruel men are! Kornstock reads the opinions, smiles sadly, and the corners of his mouth are twitching all the time. He told me to-day that music is his saviour. "Exactly so," I said, "and every saviour bears a cross." But he will not be suppressed. Then he showed me a paper and asked me to read it. The choral society, "The Crown," in Vienna, had made use of two of Kornstock's songs at its first concert.

"They display no mean talent; the popular character has been grasped in a masterly way, and there is much deep feeling. The new choral society seems to us to be called upon to cultivate such compositions in particular. It has fresh and original power at its command, and it is only to be regretted that the conductor is not equal to his task."

I copied out the notice, because it restored Kornstock to health.

He arose. Towards evening he came to see me at the rectory. But he sat quite still in front of me, and in the end he went away again. At the door he suddenly grasped my hand—"Don't

forget me, Father, and don't be angry." I did not understand.

22nd May.

But now I understand what he meant when he was with me a few days ago. He has run away. He left a note for me, and one for the blacksmith, saying that it was quite impossible for him to remain schoolmaster any longer, so he was going to Vienna, and would soon be sending good news. The school-children found the notes this morning. He went off the night before. In Unterschuttbach they say they saw him going off, carrying a bundle. The blacksmith is so angry that he wants to send his men after him, to catch him up and bring him back. I cannot be angry with a man who is so ill, for he is very ill indeed. And bring him back? I have always heard that the music-mad are the very worst of lunatics.

7th July.

It is hard work. I manage to keep school somehow, but the church service without the organ!— Yesterday a letter came from him. He was deeply repentant at having deserted us, but had at last taken up his rightful position. The choral society, "The Crown," had received him with rejoicings. He had already conducted a few rehearsals and was to be made conductor within a

very short time. He added that they were now studying his oratorio *Moses*, and were all quite sure that a glorious career as an artist was now awaiting him. He often thought of St Mary's and all the dear folks there, but it could not be helped. He asked us to keep him in kindly remembrance, and to send him his bed-things, as he was in want of them.

At all events we know where he is now. Perhaps he will really get on better there and become a celebrity. The carrier shall take his things to-morrow.

Beginning of August.

My parishioners have had the chance of learning a good deal lately. Oh, these tourists! They know everything, and they dispose of weighty and venerable matters of the Faith in a few light words. Yesterday one of them was talking to Rolf, who accompanied him to the Dreispitz. They were talking about the joys of heaven. The tourist said they consisted in good food and drink and beautiful women. Rolf is a dangerous fellow, but this time he was quite good, and said that eternal happiness consisted in the contemplation of God. Whereupon the tourist remarked that it must be deucedly dull after a time. Then Rolf asked—"Why are you climbing up the mountain; there is nothing to be seen

but the glory of God." You foolish boy, if you believe that all these gentlemen climb the mountains for love of God's beautiful Nature. That would be as good as divine service. The gentleman from the town confided to Rolf why he liked staying in the cow-keepers' huts. Rolf must have blushed. One of the wood-cutters told me. Perhaps the smith is right in sending none but dairymen up for the future. The farmer from Zaunstieg is said to have exclaimed when he heard it—"There you are again. Instead of attracting tourists, you frighten them away!"

One has one's confessional and one's church, of course. But when I know there is a stranger in church, I am quite distracted, and preach wrathfully about the wicked world and its contempt for the Catholic Church, and I am always thinking of the strangers all the time, and my parishioners cannot make me out.

4th August.

Kornstock has written. It is about the music in the choir. He has left it to the church. He says he is well, but nothing further. His opera is nowhere mentioned. But we have heard a little through an agent from Vienna, who came to offer his coffee to our grocer.

The man belonged to the same choral society as Kornstock, but Kornstock no longer belongs

to "The Crown." He quarrelled with the conductor. So he was turned out, and now gets his living by copying music.

"With copying music!" Why don't you come back to St Mary's?

12th August.

Kornstock has lost his chance; another man has come. To-day the new schoolmaster arrived. He is a young man. He has a black moustache like a hussar. He wears deer-skin breeches and laced shoes like the peasants, but much finer. Everything about him is new-fashioned. As far as the landlord of the New Inn can tell, he appears to be very jolly and very strong. The skittle-alley is too short for him. He gives the ball a screw that carries it out as far as the cross. As the organ is just being repaired, I do not yet know whether the new schoolmaster, Sandor Uilaky, is a good musician.

In school he has made a smart beginning. Although he praises the children's good conduct very highly, he is not content with their thirst for knowledge. He says they have no idea of physics or chemistry, and have never heard of Pericles or Julius Cæsar. One boy knew of Columbus—that he had invented the egg, and another told of Charlemagne that he swung the censer at Mass and could make fine trousers.

The great king hardly imagined that he would have such an easy time in Universal History !

[Here there is an interruption in the priest's MS., from which it may be concluded that everything remained unchanged in the parish for about two years. A good deal may have altered gradually during this period, so that the simple-minded man would not notice it, but we observe essential differences even in the next entry in the Diary.]

5th May 1880.

As late as 1880 I still had to learn how to catch wolves.

The Italian workmen down in the gorges must have blasted one of their hiding-places, else how are we to explain the sudden appearance of wolves. In former years they were very numerous, and even to-day one can see the pits in Oberschuttbach and in the Rauhgraben where they were caught. But Fock the peasant has another way of killing them. After the wolf had devoured two of his goats, he drove a stake into the ground on his field near the edge of the wood. To this stake he fastened a ram by a long rope, and it walked round and round and bleated. The peasant with his gun was keeping watch from the loft. Not long after, the wolf came out of

the wood, his eyes gleaming, his tail dragging. He approached the ram and his own death was sudden. In this way the peasant has already killed several wolves. The blacksmith and I wanted to watch the fun to-day, but nothing happened, so Fock showed us the fine skins out of which he is going to have a bedcover made.

They are now building a road through the wilderness out of which the wild animals have come up, and in which even ten years ago a bear is said to have dwelt. The rural authorities and the Alpine Club are giving money for the purpose. They are going to make us Torwald folk pay toll because we have given nothing ; " So we shall still go on driving through ' Wurmlucken ' as hitherto," says the blacksmith. " We are not going to bear their yoke."

Last summer we had several families of town visitors in the district. They thoroughly enjoy being here and come again. The peasants arrange spare rooms, and earn more in two months by letting them than their fields and pastures bring in during a whole year. Why, the strangers even pay cash for wild cherries and bilberries. The townsmen go about the mountains with hammers, herbaria, maps, compasses and guns. The women and children sometimes even take up rakes and help to make hay. In the evenings they sit in the inn and eat and drink

heartily. They require fresh meat every day and beer in bottles. At the same time they relate their adventures in wood and field. The school-master likes sitting with them, and relates many daring feats of mountain-climbing and hunting ; or he pays compliments to the fine ladies and gives them flowers. However much they appreciate Mr Sandor's conversation, they do not exactly fly to hear him play the organ, nor to hear me preach. They say they would like to go to church, if it were not for the hill, but they don't seem to mind the Hohe Rauh. Semmerl, the guide, earns so much money, that he finds it impossible to sleep in the hay any longer. He has taken a room at the landlord's house in Unterschuttbach. He has hung up a fine mirror there, and put up a feather-bed and taken his Johanna to live with him. They eat meat with salad and sleep far on into the day, when he is not in the mountains. He has become my enemy, because I have advised him to marry. He has proved to me and to the blacksmith, out of the Statute Book, that we cannot unite or separate them unless they themselves wish it.

The new Alpine hut on the Rauh is said to have been visited by more than two hundred persons last summer. They now climb up from the other side also and come down through the Torwald valley. Sometimes strangers come to the

rectory and inquire after historical documents dealing with this settlement. Others again examine the water, the soil and the rocks with their instruments. They are all very peculiar and very polite people, but it used to be more homely in our valley in the olden days.

11th May.

Michael Kornstock, the old schoolmaster, is said to have died. Nothing more had been heard of him for a long time. A few of his things are still here. They belonged to him, but he never fetched them, however poor he might have been;—at times they say he was very poor. My heart sometimes aches when I think of him and his foolish ambition. God grant that he may now be joining in the angel music in heaven above.

5th June.

When I first woke up to-day it was light in my room. Was it already dawning? With this thought in my mind I went to sleep again. In the morning, when Ruprecht brought my boots, he asked whether I had already looked out of the window. I did so, and saw blue streaks of mist in the valley, and at the other side, at the foot of the Schattleiter a thick column of smoke was rising. "Father, the Zaunstieg farm was burnt down in the night." After Mass I went over there.

On the way, I heard the people's opinion of the cause of the fire. A quantity of silver coin was hidden in the yard, of which the owner himself had known nothing, and if silver remains in one place for ninety-nine years, there is a fire. Old Christl limped along too and nodded to everyone. "God in heaven has punished the miser. Get away, you beast of a dog!" for a little cur had bitten his trousers. In the field, in the midst of the long grass, stood cows and sheep. The fire had finished with the old farm. Only the stove and fireplace were almost intact; one could have begun cooking and baking on them. In the field lay some kitchen utensils and pails for water. A woman was washing at the trough near a well. She was the farmer's wife, and was in chemise and petticoat. After she had quickly dried her hands on the latter, she came up to me.

"Father, it's a terrible state of affairs. We have not been able to save anything. When we woke up, everything was in flames; we could hardly get the cattle out of the byres, the little pigs are done for, everything is burnt—my linen, my tub of lard, my chests full of flax—everything is burnt!"

"Where are your children?"

"The blacksmith has taken them off." The latter was just coming up from the village.

"They are all right, neighbour. My old

woman is sending you some clothes ; put them on. Yes, Father, now there is something for us to do again."

The owner of the Zaunstiegel farm had been raking about among the ashes in the stables with a long pole. Now he walked slowly down. He had no coat, no hat and no shoes, and his whole body was covered with soot. When he approached the smith he folded his hands. "Do not forsake me, my dear neighbours."

"Surely you know the custom in the Torwald," answered the smith, gravely.

"You know, I spoke against you two years ago at the election ; you know that"—

"That was all right," said the smith. "On such an occasion, everything must be talked over. You were on our side in the year of famine, even though it was against your will, and we shall take your part now. With the help of God, you will be living in your new house this time next year. Now, take your wife and go and have some warm soup. You will stay at Fock's house."

Afterwards, when the smith and I were going home, I felt obliged to tell him how good it was of him not to bear the Zaunstiegel farmer a grudge.

"Oh," he laughed, "God has made matters clear enough to him, and every hard word would be a sin. I have good timber and will provide

the iron fittings, the sawyer will give the planks, the carpenter will be paid by the parish, and the other workmen will be sent by the neighbours. We will soon set him on his feet again, I don't worry about that. If only I had no other worries, Father."

I stood still and looked at him.

"I want to ask your advice, sir," said the smith.

I had to urge him to tell me his difficulty. It was about his boy. "What is the matter with Rolfel, blacksmith? He has not been with me for ever so long."

"Nor with me," he answered curtly, and then he told me the whole story.

Rolf has been up in the Dreibrunnen Wald with the wood-cutters for some time now, because he will have to serve at the next conscription, and does not wish to do so. His father has already sent up twice, but the boy sent back a message, "Do what you like, but I am not going to be a soldier."

"That's all stupid talk," the smith continued. "He won't be asked whether he wants to or not. But he has suddenly grown obstinate, and he is usually such an obedient child. I believe he does not want to go from home. I don't like his being a soldier either, but if he were to be a deserter, Father, I should never live through it.

The levy takes place on the seventh, and all the other fellows are ready. There are eleven of them here to-day, and my boy will be a renegade. He says they will have to fetch him by main force, else he will not go. They won't stand any nonsense. What am I to do? "

I am amazed. Otherwise he is a man of iron, and rules the whole parish, and yet he does not know what to do with his own gentle boy!

"You don't know him, sir—you don't know him," he cried. Well, it is just possible that he is the son of his father, in which case he certainly has a head on his shoulders. I intend to go up to him.

We went up this very day. We walked for three hours through woods and over hill and dale. The woods belong to the monastery, and there is a good deal of timber to be cut, for we shall soon be having the new road through the valley. It was difficult to find the wood-cutter's hut, for it stood in a narrow gorge and was completely concealed by trees and bushes. The smith accompanied me as far as the entrance, but he remained outside under a larch tree. I went into the hut; at first I saw nothing but darkness, but soon I saw that it was quite comfortably arranged. It contained a kitchen and two rooms. The wood-cutters had all gone down into the valley, as

work was over for the day, and Rolf was alone. Since I saw him last at his Lent confession, he has grown ; he has now a slight fair beard, and is by no means bad-looking. He was just in the act of sharpening his razor on his leather breeches before shaving, as if he meant to keep the Sabbath holy, even up here in the wilderness. And this well-behaved boy is going to be a deserter?

Then a very strange conversation took place between us. I ought to have been better prepared for it.

At first he was very surprised at my appearing in the hut, and it was such a difficult ascent too.

"Yes, my dear Rolfel," I said, "and I should not come up for no reason at all. I have come on your account. Your comrades are waiting for you, and you must all leave to-morrow at mid-day, in order to reach Altstadt in time on Monday."

"Altstadt? I've nothing to do in Altstadt." He said it defiantly, and his eye flashed.

"You surely don't mean that seriously? Do you, the son of the village judge, the son of Kimpel the smith, mean to be a deserter?"

"Well, and what if I do?"

"Isn't everyone going? And what is wrong with the present-day soldiers? They are gentlemen, compared with what they used to be."

"I don't wish to be a gentleman. I want to stay up here in the sun."

"Rolf, you are fond of reading good books. Have you never come across the command to obey those who are in authority over you?"

"I will work and be honest and do no one any harm. I will fulfil that law, and the authorities must be content."

"But if you only obey the laws that happen to please you, you are not obeying the authorities at all. You are only pleasing yourself."

"That's quite true," said the youth. "I am a very young man, and I do not wish to quarrel with the priest, but I am not going down."

I was considering what to say next, and finally I continued—"We need not quarrel, Rolf, but I should like to know why you are so obstinate. I don't know that side of you at all."

Then he laid his razor on the window-sill, stood up and said—"If the authorities take it into their heads to command me to kill my brother, as it happened hundreds of times in the Prussian wars, what am I to do?"

"What have the Prussian wars to do with you? We must defend our country against its foes, and whoever requires protection and order from the State must do something for the State in return."

"Father," cried the boy, "you know as well, and better than I do, that from time immemorial

we Torwald folk have been our own protectors, and have kept our own order. If the parish or the pastor calls, I shall not be the last to come."

"Yes, you have proved that, Rolf, but things are changing rapidly. Wait till the new road is finished, then we shall be in much closer contact with the State, and we shall have our rights in return for our duties."

But he continued—"My father keeps firm, does he not, and yet even he gives way too much. He should never have allowed the road to be built ; it will do us no good. Formerly we could have stopped every foe at the 'Wurmlucken,' and without a blow too. How will it be in the future? He will drive in on golden wheels, as it says in an old book."

"Rolf, you speak like a very young man, who ought to go out into the wide world and take his share in the great work of humanity, which concerns us all."

"Yes, Father, be a sergeant, and in the best of cases a steward in a town, or a labourer, and afterwards a beggar, who is not allowed to beg, and ends his days in an hospital or a gutter."

"Wherever do you get your ideas from, up here in your gloomy forest?"

"Why, one can see it. How are Perner-Sep and Johann from Rambach faring, who never came home when they had finished with their

soldiering? I heard Johann's death-knell a week ago, and he was thrown into a pauper's grave in Vienna—Ferdinand, the road-builder, wrote and told me about it. They go to ruin abroad, and their farms do the same at home."

"So that is why you do not want to be a soldier, Rolf?"

The boy replied—"We have wandered from the main point. I have never told anyone why I don't wish to be a soldier, but I will tell you, for if anyone understands me, it is you. In the Scriptures we read that all men are brothers. You have often said so too. So now I ask you, Father, how can one kill people? One is not even to take vengeance on one's enemies, and then one is to kill innocent persons, whom one does not even know, and who have never done one any harm."

"My dear Rolf, things do not always happen in life just as the Scriptures say. You must not forget that even Christ Himself preached the sword. Your way of thinking simply means that you grasp the sword by the blade."

"That is all right; then one holds a cross in one's hand."

"If you do not defend yourself against your enemy, he will kill you."

"Let him do it. It is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong."

"Rolf, some time ago, I gave you the history of Charlemagne. Did you read it?"

"He was not a real Christian. He introduced Christianity with fire and sword."

"And yet he was canonised."

"I should never have done it," Rolf replied. "Good can never come out of evil. You say it yourself, sir, and your books say so, and now you have come up to me, to persuade me to go down and shoot people."

That is what he said, and I did not know what was happening to me. I felt depressed. "Rolf," I said, "how am I, or your family, to blame for the laws of the world. And are we to see you led off by a policeman, as if you were a criminal?"

He hesitated. "If they do that, they do wrong, for I am a free man," he cried aloud. "I do not wish to disgrace my people. Yes, Father, I will go. I shall go of my own free will. I will be a soldier, and I will carry a gun; I will load it, and I will take aim, but I shall never shoot—never, never."

"That will be all right, my son. Pack up your things and come with me."

Yesterday they started amid songs and rejoicing, decked with ribbons, as for a wedding. Strangely enough they will go to the battlefield in the same way. Strangely enough young folks go to their

death or their marriage with the same enthusiasm. To-day, as I am completing this entry, the fate of our young fellows is being decided.

9th June.

Six recruits have returned. Five were taken. Rudolf Eschgartner was among the latter. A boy from Moenchsthal, who was not picked, offered to take his place. But Rolf refused, saying—"No, my dear fellow, you would shoot."

The officers are said to be delighted with the strong youth. The blacksmith endures it grimly. And I ask myself, what will happen in the next war, if the soldiers refuse to shoot . . . ?

Thus we preach Christianity, and nothing but Christianity, and if anyone really becomes a Christian, he is a ready-made criminal at once.

16th August.

The Divine Service is often for me an outlet for my soul's needs ; at other times, however, it is simply a duty imposed upon me.

There are days when the priest at the altar is more occupied with the hay in the meadow, or a newly purchased cow, than with the sacred mystery.

In the first year of my charge here, every Sunday during High Mass in our church, an old man with a stave, having a little wooden box at

the end of it, walked around flourishing it under the noses of the people sitting left and right on the benches, at the same time making half-audible remarks.

“Now, Ulrich, no wretched farthings to-day ; we must have a penny. You know you cheated Fock over that cow transaction yesterday : return it to the Lord.”

Or he would rattle his box upon the hat-brim of an old woman and cry, “You farmer’s wife from the hills, take off your hat. C. do you think you are related to the Almighty, that you do not take off your hat in church ? Goodness me, how stuck-up the women are ! There, throw in a coin or two, and I will be good-tempered again. It belongs to the Lord.”

If anyone slumbered upon his bench, the sidesman would rattle the box and ask—“Where did you spend the night that you haven’t had your sleep out ? Man, you must do penance by giving some silver to-day. It belongs to the Lord.”

I got rid of this humorous individual and substituted for the collecting-box an offertory-box, that I had placed in the church door. But observe, the offertory-box did not contain as much in the whole year as that little box on the stave in one Sunday. We could no longer afford to buy the candles and the incense for Divine Service. To-day the little collecting-box is once

more rattled during Mass, only I have put dumb Bernhard in charge of it, who can right eloquently beg with his kindly eyes whilst the people are at any rate secure with him from public rebuke.

28th August.

To-day, passing through the church, I saw several men conversing with one another in low but animated tones.

I much wished I knew what important matter it was that occupied them. It turned out to be of interest. They were talking of some tourists who had gone up the mountain a few days earlier and had not since been heard of. Seven young townsmen had formed the intention of creeping into the Laudamus Cave and conducting their researches for the concealed treasure. The smith, it is said, has already sent men in search of them.

It is rainy weather.

We had all to go in search. In front of the cave a knapsack and alpenstock were found together, with footsteps showing that they had gone inside. What purposeless recklessness! A shepherd is said to have seen them creeping into the cave across the stream at night with torches. Since then the water has risen and does nothing but whirl and eddy into the hole which it will soon fill. If they are really within, then God have mercy on them!

A woodman, who is acquainted with several parts of the cave, says certainly that nothing much can happen to them.

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They will indeed be backboneless if they do not succeed in helping themselves. This likelihood of rescue prompts us, indeed absolutely compels us, to make every conceivable effort to aid them.

30th August.

The water is rushing into the ravine and the abyss with frightful strength. More than forty men are working to draw the water and break up the rocks and clear out of the way the swollen masses of earth and fragments of wood that are squeezed in the opening. We want workmen and powder. The poor fellows will have taken enough food for a few days. Surely if they had remembered about the flood-tide they would never have penetrated into the cave.

There is a rumour of a bit of paper bearing the words, "With the help of God rescue us, dear people. Nigh to us are death, hunger, drowning, cold, darkness, madness!"

According to another report they had saved themselves by means of caves in the mountain and had reached daylight through a cleft in the ice up above. At the same time it is said that shrill whistling and loud cries were heard coming

from the mountain. I fear they have all already perished, washed over the precipice by the waters.

Is not that preferable ! Four days in the cave, without hope or light ! It would seem an eternity, without warmth or light ! It is almost unrealisable.

The smith fastened a little barrel with provisions and candles to a rope and let it float in, but the rope split, and the barrel was whirled into the depths. We sought help on every side, and from every side people came with suggestions and attempts already made.

The district superintendent of Schwarzbau brought soldiers and gunpowder and he himself took part in the blasting. Every one was eager to help.

31st August.

Day and night the blasting resounded. The men from Torwald worked in the depths of the water like heroes.

A woman, a stranger, was near them, crouching by the rock wall, and cried out—"Husband, dear husband, be comforted ; help is coming !" But there was only the roar of the water and from the entombed not a sign of life, not one. Did they but know, if still alive, what is being done to rescue them, how from every district people have hastened with every conceivable appliance of rescue !

But neither trumpet-sound nor crash of gun-powder can penetrate within those unhewn walls and they know nothing.

If we had but the last sad certainty that they are already in eternal rest.

"We ought not to give them up," the smith says.

Rather higher it would be possible to break through a small mountain dyke, but against this procedure Hies im Grund is strongly opposed, for the released waters would flow over his meadows right up to his house. I argued with him, that when it is a question of men's lives there could be no consideration of meadow or farm.

He, however, continued obdurate, crying—"Why should I consent to lose my property and possessions through the folly of strangers. What had the fools to seek for in this hole?"

Many agreed with him and they would not knock down the wall.

There is no favourable news to chronicle. Yet hope has not entirely deserted us: it is for ever being renewed. The operations go on uninterruptedly. The innkeeper sent up provisions, and drinking booths are set up in the rock, as if it were a fair.

Yesterday the smith and I went again to Hies im Grund and told him he must clear his house, as

the water might come, for the wall must be broken through. He shouted that he would never consent to this. It was his property.

"You shall be fully compensated," the smith told him.

"By whom," he asked. "By the townspeople?"

He laughed noisily and rushed away. And to-day, soon after midnight, he climbed into the High Ravine, which was alive with men, torches and the roaring waters. He could hold out no longer. The humanity in him would not be suppressed. It cried out loudly that the wall must be broken through and all his possessions lost, rather than have cast at him for the rest of his life the reproach—"It is owing to you that they have perished."

So, since early morning, eighty men have laboured at the work of tunnelling the mountain wall and in two days they declared it could be done. These entombed beings! Sustain them, compassionate Saviour, with Thy consolation, and let not the love and willing sacrifice of so many men be in vain! Relatives of the buried men have arrived, a mother, a brother, and two sisters, poor people evidently. Their grief is overwhelming. One of the women became unconscious upon seeing the terrible cave.

I sought to comfort them with everything that

suggested itself to me in earth and heaven, and with much, indeed, that I did not believe in myself.

The opening in the wall, which is to divert the course of the water grows from hour to hour. The people are growing intensely hopeful.

There is but one thought, one emotion in the whole countryside. Never have I felt such pride in my manhood as at this moment.

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They are saved ! They live ! all seven of them ! God Almighty be praised. All the necessary labour was completed yesterday evening. The water shot up in broad streams over the meadows round Hies im Grund's farm. This soon fell in with a crash and was engulfed. The approach to the Laudamus Cave is now free. Into it, through mud and slush, ten or twelve men waded with candles, ropes and axes. The others stayed all night at the entrance with torches and all sorts of provisions in readiness. From the declivities round reflecting the red light came the sound of loud praying.

I myself repeated in a loud voice the Litanies.

And towards morning, just as the grey day began, they came in sight. Blood-red forms, guided by the rescuers, approach with swaying steps between the deep wall.

The roar of joy which now broke forth is

indescribable. Men embraced one another and sobbed aloud. The newly delivered alone walked in silence, casting around glances of astonishment. What meant this crowd of people?

They submitted with indifference to the embraces and caresses of the others, one indeed went so far as to repulse them. Another said, "Well, as you see, we have found nothing."

Their clothes were coated with clay, but beyond this they bore no marks to distinguish them from the rest of us. Of distressful circumstances there was not one word. When the people wished to place them on the litters that had been prepared for them, they cried, "Are we then children, that we should allow ourselves to be carried?"

"We are obliged to you, dear people," said one of the rescued to the bystanders—"greatly obliged to you for all your trouble. But with time we should have worked ourselves out."

A pair of young fellows cocked their hats sideways on their heads and cried laughingly together. "That was an adventure wasn't it? But the cave was a fraud."

I drew closer to the rescued men.

And as the rosy morning light gilded the sea and the glowing wheel of the sun enlarged as he gradually rose behind the distant mountains, I thought surely now some of them will fall upon their knees and send up to Heaven a prayer of

gratitude. But not a single one took the opportunity. A feeling of shame rushed over me. I knew not whether it was because of the delusion I had suffered or because of the stupidity and ingratitude of these men.

But men are still in the dark about their fellow-men. We have got to learn that no one came out of the Laudamus Cave in any way different in nature than as he entered.

Invited to come to the pastor's house and rest on the beds prepared for them there, they made answer that they were much obliged, but would prefer to remain together at the inn.

After this I crept aside and went off alone to St Maria. In a barn behind Oberschuttbach I came upon the family of Hies im Grund in a barn. They wept and complained that they were homeless.

Fragments from their former dwelling-house floated upon the muddy water through the valley. I took the unfortunate people with me into the vicarage.

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Like a lost soul I wandered around the whole day. What people there are! That I could have so little knowledge of men I could not have believed. Yesterday evening at Unterschuttbach Inn I listened to the stories they related.

All day long the great guest-chamber has been full of people who have come from afar to

hear the adventures of the cave-invaders from their own lips. Some of the rescued men wished at first to impose an entrance fee, but others opposed this on the ground that it was not altogether fitting. But when they paid for their wine—and during the recital there was drinking—they raised no objection. One of the older men, a cabinetmaker, related the following:—

“We seven comrades agreed once, whenever we happened to be without work or on furlough, to go together to the mountain and creep into the cave. We went then up the mountain. We had also heard of the treasure in the Cave of Laudamus. That we could have found a use for. Early on Thursday morning, after we had penetrated right into the cavern, we started searching for it in all directions by the light of our torches. We went from one cave to another, up and down, backwards and forwards. Snow-white stones are hanging right up like pegs. But we found nothing. What we must do next time is to bear more to the left.”

“What, then, did you search for?” the man was asked. To this he made no reply but went on—

“There were toads and other creatures, and the bookbinder feared we might meet with dragons. In the distance we heard thunder and went along in the direction of it. The cave had now become as big as a church. Once we were standing before

an abyss. The water there falls down as if in a funnel. A fog came on and our torches grew into rainbow-like circlets.

“We spoke to each, but could not understand what was said. Then we began to be afraid and turned back.

“In the afternoon, as we tried to get out the way we came in, we saw the water then, with numberless spars of wood stopping up the entrance. Ah, well, then we must wait till the water went down! It was fortunate we had some food with us. That is what I have always said. If one goes to sea, or into caverns, one must take provisions. We sat down together on a dry spot, stuck some candles in the wall and waited. All the time the water was rising higher, and, dropping down from above, furnished us with drinking water.

“We divided the provisions into seven equal parts. I said, “So much and no more must be consumed each day, as we do not know how long this will go on.” We also economised with the candles and sat often in the darkness.

“In the first days we sang and the time slipped by; afterwards this mode of passing the time got monotonous. We became quiet and did not talk much to each other. The bookbinder sketched, but had afterwards to use the drawing-book to light the fire with. We had plenty of firewood, which had just floated down, but it was

wet, and there was smoke before long enough to stifle us.

“We let fire-making alone, and when we were cold we chopped up wood or rolled about stones. The umbrella-maker had a watch, so we were able to note carefully how the time went. At nine o'clock in the evening we all laid down to sleep. All seven together were wrapped in a plaid which belonged to the bookbinder. We slept like rats.

“Between Friday and Saturday the night was awful, the water rising always higher and higher. Some of us had always to keep watch on the water. Then on Sunday the barrel arrived with ham and bacon and cheese ; the bread, however, was not eatable ; it was through and through soaked.

“If we hadn't just wanted to move away the jammed-in logs from the front, we shouldn't have noticed the barrel, as it was completely squeezed in amongst the spars of wood.

“‘They are looking for us : we shall soon get down to them,’ we said to each other. ‘If only we had some tobacco’—and then we suddenly heard some shooting.

“Then we said—‘The cavern will soon be open.’ Later the shooting ceased and nothing more was heard for some time, so that we were of the opinion the cowards had lost courage. Then time dragged somewhat. We sat down, and would have played cards if we had taken any with us.

“‘It would be better to pray,’ said the locksmith.

“When we had prayed, the bookbinder said the Lord’s Prayer. Again we did nothing. Often we seemed stunned. The little clerk was quite distracted. ‘Shall we never come out of this. Shall we die in this hole?’

“‘Will you hold your tongue at once?’ said I; ‘to trumpet disasters won’t help us.’

“He went and laid down by the wall and did not again worry us. At last the shooting began again. Again we set to work, but the barrier will not yield. And the water—the water!

“So it goes on for a while. Then the umbrella-maker says, ‘This is the eighth day. How much more candle have we got? One single scrap!’

“‘Let us strike it so that they can see a light when they come.’ Suddenly we seemed to hear the water no longer, so that I began to think we must have grown deaf.

“Then someone from without shouted ‘Are you there?’

“‘Yes,’ we cried out clearly.

“‘How are you?’

“‘Ho, ho! we are all right. But you have gladdened us.’”

This is the cabinetmaker’s story. His companions had often interrupted him and each had represented his own opinion and feelings, but of

that which I was longing to hear there was not a syllable.

But when one considers it clearly and quietly, it was, after all, a bit of courageous endurance. One might almost call it heroic.

They took it all naturally, as the only thing to be done, including the rescuing. It was the duty of their fellow-creatures and no great gratitude was due to them. Granted. Still, if I could but have seen one eye moist with emotion, just one ! And what weeping there had been for them !

No difference had been shown with regard to their position. Everyone from far and near had assisted in feverish anxiety to relieve these seven beings. Well, however the thing may be explained, I thanked God for this proof, for this primal testimony, of men's love for one another. It is a sacred manifestation of the Eternal Light.

7th September.

The resurrected men have departed ; only the little clerk is left behind. He lies in bed at the inn with fever. He begged me to come to him. I found him much shaken. He laid his head on my breast and sobbed.

He said little, but just went on sobbing, holding my hand tight and kissing it over and over again, an hundred times at least. I knew not what to say beyond again and again the words—

“God bless thee, my son—God bless thee!”

My spirit is filled with joy now. I am indescribably grateful for this gratitude.

8th September.

The little clerk attended Divine Service to-day. Regina says he fixed his hands across his breast and never turned his eyes from the altar. In the afternoon, accompanied by a shepherd, he again ascended into the Laudamus Cave. On the way, said the shepherd, he scarcely spoke a dozen words, but on reaching the top he gazed down for long into the water, which now once more filled the cave. Of what had he thought? On the return journey he passed by the ruined dwelling-house of Hies.

The shepherd explained to him how this had been necessary, whereupon the young man had taken out his pocket-book and written something in it. To-morrow he goes back to his great city.

BOOK II

18th July 1881.

In the Torwald Valley the weather is stormy.

Already this summer, strangers have installed themselves in the houses on the mountain on the other side of Schattleiter. The finest house there had been burnt down a few years ago. It is not built in the old Alpine style of the Torwald houses. It is a rough-cast walled building, with more window than wall, a flat shingle roof with three high chimneys, from out of which nearly every day little clouds of smoke ascend.

There live also on the estate a distinguished family who come from Pesth. The master wears a full beard, coal-black, and gold-framed *pince-nez* upon his large, well-cut nose.

In spite of the fact that he is already bald-headed and corpulent round the waist, he still gets himself up in juvenile fashion, and always wears a fashionably-cut coat, very fresh linen with gold studs, and is above all polite to his wife. She is also very elegant, but at times appears somewhat negligent. Then, at times, grown-up sons are there, but they soon go off

again. I have particularly noticed these folk, as they are the only people who have left cards upon the smith and myself. Upon the cards was inscribed, "Isidor Ritter von Yark." As the people cannot pronounce the whole name, they call him the "Yagd Ritter" (Hunting Knight), or, shortly, "Ritter."

This family are so pleased with Torwald that they are going to build a summer residence. The "Ritter" is engaged in transactions concerning the site for building with Gral in Oberschuttbach; but the old woman says, "Not a handful of earth from Gral's land so long as I live." She is now a hundred and four years old. But the "Ritter" appears to be somewhat impatient. Meanwhile, he is buying woody land in the mountains for his favourite son, Hermann, who is said to be a great hunter. He has also bought land from Hies, who has not been able to re-build his house.

Of all the summer visitors, the lady and gentleman are the only ones who come regularly to church on Sundays and feast-days. They have rented the first seats on the women's side, and for one year, therefore, have paid the cost ten times over.

The natives at first were inclined to grumble a little when they saw the stout gentleman, with *pince-nez* on nose, seated amongst the women. The sexes are otherwise entirely separated in the church, the

men being on the right, the women on the left side. Since, however, the "Ritter" has presented the banner of pure thick silk with the "Saints and Sebastian," he has been held in the highest respect. We shall all be pious if our House of God has found a wealthy patron.

The blacksmith, however, was not pleased, and he urged on some of the old peasants to join in giving the money for another church banner, so that it could displace the one given by the "hypocritical Knight fellow," as he calls him.

The tourists are exploring so much that already three experienced mountain-guides have come forward. Semmerl is the most sought after.

The innkeeper at Unterschuttbach has arranged a special room for the tourists. There are newspapers, pictures of the Alps hanging on the walls, also maps of the mountains and lists of the guides, and even a certificate of honour that the host had received from the Alpine Society, as a reward for keeping so excellent an inn and for allowing a foot-path to be made over his ground up to the Three Peaks.

Bartholomew's Day.

I experience a feeling of anxiety for which I cannot account; nevertheless, there it is. The Mass had been specially well attended, though perhaps less on account of the holy apostles and

martyrs dedicated to St Bartholomew, than for another reason which was revealed soon after the morning service. I was still sitting over my breakfast when the carpenter Sep came into the room saying, "The builders beg that the Herr Pastor will come at once to Neuwirt."

I soon saw what was the matter. The inn-parlour was filled with people. The blacksmith was also there and was sitting to-day at a side-table. The people were not speaking. Now and again they whispered and kept their eyes fixed upon their plates. They were for the most part young householders. At first I thought something was afoot concerning myself, but it concerned the smith. I saw the man from Zaunstiegel nudge the draper with his elbow as he said, "Now begin." The draper, a dried-up little man, stretched himself out, and after clearing his throat began—

"The reason for which we are here to-day you will soon know. It is concerned with what is good and also bad. For once, a good time is coming for our valley, but if we cannot profit by it, what does that matter to us? Indeed, we desire to profit by it—I myself, and you, and all of us. But our thick-headed friend opposes it in every way he can, in order that we may remain in our poverty. Fortunately he cannot do all he wishes to, but nevertheless he can still do a great

deal of mischief. When they built the Home for Strangers on the Nauk heights, he was opposed to it. He was opposed to the laying down of the new street. We ought to have entered into the Trade Union, but he was against this. When we might have turned our public woods, from which no wood can be brought down, into pure gold, he was against this. When it was a question of getting the mail-coach to come here from Alpenzell, he was opposed. But I could chant you a whole litany of the mischief he does. I ask you, fellow-sufferers, is it not so? ”—

“It is so—it is absolute truth,” they murmured with approval. The draper went on—

“And we call him the director of the community ! It would be more correct to call him the one who holds back the community.

“With him we shall come to the beggar’s staff, whereas in Schwarzaeu, in Haslau and everywhere, business is flourishing and the people growing rich.”

“He is perfectly right,” the people whispered to one another. The draper continued—

“Our land is barren, our winds cold. Every day, as you know, in order that we may not come to beggary, we must labour arduously.

“If the feeble are wise, they will ally themselves with the strong ; and the poor will follow their example with the rich. People will not credit the quantity of gold that exists in this world.

"It is gold that rules the world, not Kimpel the smith."

"His first and last counsel is always, 'Keep together!' Good; we will once again keep together but against him. Our demand is that Simon Eschgartner shall resign."

When the ready-tongued Kramen had thus spoken, there was a moment of such intense stillness that we might have fancied an angel was going through the room. And I thought to myself, "What will now happen?"

The smith rose slowly. Inclined somewhat to one side, he stood and spoke as quietly as if he were asking for a jug of cider.

"My time is not up yet, and consequently I will not resign."

"No," now shouted out the man from Zaunstieg across his table, "unfortunately for you, smith, you have not enough sense of honour."

"You be quiet," called out old Ulrich, known as the "Peasant of the Lime-tree."

He added, from the oven-bench where he was sitting—

"Much talk to-day has been of the beggar's staff. I see no need for any man in our community to be a beggar so long as he can work.

"But you, fellow from Zaunstieg, you would have been one, and a real one, with stick and sack,

had not the smith allowed you to build up the burnt house.

“That the community did, and not the smith!” shouted many voices.

“If this overseer had not been there, the community would not have done this,” answered Ulrich; “and I say this: so long as the smith remains, we shall not lack for anything.”

“And therefore, I will not resign,” said the smith. “Not now anyway. It is a bad shepherd who forsakes his flocks when wolves are lying around in wait for them.”

At this there arose scornful laughter and a great clamour. The smith waited till they had shouted themselves hoarse, and then continued—

“The draper, Wastel, said that out there in Schwarzau and Haslau there are rich people. That is true, but they are not natives, they are strangers. The natives are very poverty-stricken; they have either gone into service or emigrated. The strangers have comfortably established themselves. They cut down the wood, drain the ground, and when there is no more to be done they will go off again.

“If I resign, the same thing will happen here. It is true that I cannot give commands, but my advice is willingly followed, and whoever through it has come to harm?

“I shall remain and protect our old inheritance

and our independence as long as I can. When my time is up you can then make your choice. Till then I am your Director, and that is my answer ; and now go home to your work."

A great moving of chairs, making a sound like thunder, followed.

Many called out—"We will have more to do with you."

After this there was again silence. I could see how the smith's hand trembled.

The crowd went on scoffing in half-audible tones, and the man from Zaunstieg cried out—

"He will make of Torwald a wilderness, so that he himself can be the robber-captain of it."

I noticed that the smith was digging his fists into the table and bending his head right forward.

I resolved that this unreasonable man from Zaunstieg should hold his tongue.

I gave him a look, but he only laughed aloud, poured out some wine into his mug and went on talking.

"It is for this that he has already sent his boys up into the wood of the Three Springs, and now he is to be master himself."

Hardly were the words uttered than the smith had thrown over the table.

As he went forwards they seized hold of him and pushed him backward, so that he fell to the

ground making a cracking noise. He jumped up, but again slipped backwards, and there he lay.

And this is how the day of St Bartholomew was to close!

Whilst he lay on the bench, outstretched and motionless as a corpse, the room became empty. A few of his supporters were witnesses of his plight, as his wife, usually so composed, arrived.

A few years earlier a young physician had wished to settle in Torwald.

At the time, the smith had remarked—"Our medicine is industry, moderation and herb tea."

At the present time this medicine had been but little effectual. Alas! the doctor's services were no more. At midnight a doctor came down from Alpenzell.

During the last agony the smith pressed my hand and regarded me steadfastly, but he could no longer say anything.

There is now sad grief. "Depart, oh friend, in peace." At the grave they began to sing this song. But they did not finish, for other voices were heard striking in. It is now quite clear what this indicates. The draper and others have stationed themselves in the background and from time to time are heard making discordant notes.

One of the saddest and quietest of men at the funeral was Rolf. As they lowered his father's

coffin into the dark grave, he did not once glance down. His eyes large and moist were turned towards the glowing mountain peaks. There he stood, motionless, as if he were alone on the earth.

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With regard to the smith's death, there was a little casual questioning and cross-examination, and then judgment was given. Nothing more has transpired. It was a piece of ill-luck, an accident.

And the sun rises and sets as always.

I am full of anxiety. The anchor is broken. What will now happen? How am I, a feeble man, to guide the ship? Every day the waters grow more and more troubled. The stubborn will is overthrown. Will kindly sense do any better? May Love be my compass!

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End of August.

I do not think if the smith had lived that he would have found much to complain of in Herr von Yark.

The gentleman is inclined to be somewhat aristocratic, but he has a sense of his duty to the community and is quick to seize any opportunity of serving it.

I am much less at ease with my lady. She is a very conventional lady. She dislikes the bare knees with which it is usual for our mountain

men to go about ; and she has scruples about the lasses going with bare feet. In her residence, which is said to be extraordinarily beautiful, the lady is never supposed to go into the husband's apartment, as it often has pictures and other artistic knick-knacks of a "risky" nature. In our church, upon the altar of St Anna, there stand two angels bearing candles, which are undraped, and it has been therefore noticed that the lady never glances in this direction during Mass. A few Sundays ago I myself saw her suddenly leave the church with almost flying steps during the celebration of the Divine Service. Near her there was sitting a peasant woman who had brought her youngest child with her that he might that day receive the benediction. During the sermon the child began to announce his presence, whereupon the mother without more ado gave him the breast. It was this that caused the lady to hurry off. The people have had a hearty laugh about it and have let loose their free tongues upon the subject of the stout town dame. The lady is no longer young. She takes, they say, the greatest interest in foreign languages, and at the present moment employs a teacher of languages, a poor student, to teach her English. There is talk about it. I do not believe that it is all justified. For some days, however, I have felt more severe. The lady has sent me down her album—to keep one is now the

fashion—with the request that I would write a motto in it. I wrote in the album—"Prudery is a sign of depravity." The next day she met me in the street and beckoned to me with her fan from the carriage, saying "Many, many thanks. It was too kind of you, Herr Pastor. And how true, how true! Once more a thousand thanks."

"Herr Pastor," said Karl to me to-day, "I will not buy any more holy oil for the lamp at our grocer. I cannot use this; it is quite rancid."

"Why not use it for the salad," I answered jokingly. "But surely it is good enough to burn?"

"It is not good enough, Herr Pastor. It will not burn. There must be bad fat in it, or something of the sort. It crackled in the lamp like the bacon in the cabbage-pot. That I cannot use. The lamp oil must be pure."

"My dear Karl," said I, "the best oil for the Eternal Light is Faith."

Beginning of October.

Within me there are two souls which are opposed to each other in regard to what has happened. It is a maddening injustice or—or not. If only the voice of the people were the voice of God!

Yesterday, in the night, an expression of opinion from the people, almost unprecedented,

was uttered. For some time I have been of two minds about what has happened. It is a revolting wrong, or is the voice of the people the voice of God? Last night the voice of the people spoke in such wise as has seldom been heard. Some time ago an unknown hand pinned on the door of the Zaunstieg farm a bill, on which was written in charcoal: "Dwellers in this house, beware! Kaiser Karl's tribunal is at your doors!" Besides the owner and his servants, the family of von Yark were living in the house till their own should be ready for them. They said nothing of the notice; it has only just become known. The day before yesterday the owner of the farm was going home from his mill with a sack of rye flour on his back. It was late in the evening and the moon was shining. Suddenly he heard behind him a clanking and clanging as of chains and cow-bells, the cracking of whips, and a ghostly whistling and wailing and screaming. The farmer thought of the "Wild Huntsman," and sought to escape to the barn, but he saw dark figures gliding towards him from that direction and would have fled across the fields. But at that moment men appeared on either side of him and, in fact, most of them, as far as he could see, in peasants' garb, but otherwise quite unfamiliar. Many had faces as black as Moors (blackened faces); others wore

masks or were dressed in skins ; some looked like goats going about on their hind legs. They were armed with pitchforks, flails, scythes or rakes, while some carried grain-sifters or wisps of straw, out of which they shook the grains and hurled them into the man's face, all the while making an ear-splitting noise.

The farmer had thought from the beginning that all this was on account of the smith Kimpel, and he threw down his bundle and broke away and ran for his life. But the uncanny figures appeared everywhere and he was closed in by a half-circle of pursuers, who drove him towards his own farm.

By this time the noise had been heard in the village and we became aware that the whole valley was full of mysterious figures, gliding about like ghosts and gathering in the shadow of the houses. Karl wanted to ring the alarm-bell, whereupon we discovered that the bell-ropes were cut—but on the cut end of the rope was tied a little bag with two silver coins. It was, indeed, payment for the damage, but we couldn't ring the bell with it. But presently a handful of men collected and we hurried over to find out what the extraordinary disturbance meant. A regular Witches' Sabbath eddied about the Zaunstieg farm. We reckoned the number of the strange figures to be about five hundred. Many carried firearms. I spoke to a

few but received no answer. A number were filling baskets and tubs with dung and foul water, carrying them up ladders on to the roof and emptying them over the house; others were tearing boards off the roof, others again were sticking straw horns through the windows. The farmer had already taken refuge in his house. Torches glimmered here and there, and a dark thick-set man stepped forward, struck upon an old kettle with a hammer and called loudly for Isidor Ritter von Yark. He called until the man appeared in the loft. The Ritter tried to speak, but the din drowned everything. Then he tried to get back into the house, but the door was locked behind him and he was shut into the loft, unprotected and at the mercy of this sinister mob. Further knocks with the hammer brought silence and the fellow cried—"Stand forth, judge of the Holy Court!" A dark figure hastened forward, whether of man or woman it was impossible to tell, who began to speak in a shrill penetrating voice to Herr von Yark.

"Attend, false knight—it has struck eleven. The Emperor Karl from Untersberg is here with giants and dwarfs. To-day a Court of Justice will be held and we are all to appear. We greet you with mocking and derision. We will drive out of you the desire to stay long in our valley. There is also no place in Torwald for your wife

with her dainty treasure ; there is also no place for christenings nor for bogus banks. Go forth then, you alien vagabonds ! We have built up this country with industry and the sweat of our brow, and have trusted in God. Get yourselves away as speedily as possible or we shall find for you a different sort of escort. False knight, let me tell you that the hammer will soon strike twelve."

The last word was scarcely spoken when there arose so infernal an noise that the chickens flew out from the stableyard right over our heads. A long pole was lying there ; this the valiant speaker took hold of, broke in two, and threw the pieces against the loft. They cut into rags a large cloth hung there, and scattered the pieces in the wind. Then was to be heard the clack of the hammer and the grinding of files. The disturbed dwellers of the houses gather together, and ask what this may mean ?

In my opinion, its meaning was clear enough. The man from Zaunstiegel knew also quite well that a "Lynch Law Court" was to be held, similar to those which were held earlier in this country.

And so men and lads assembled from far and wide as had been arranged ; each stood by the other, no one told tales, no names were mentioned, no evil-doer protected. It was rumoured

that Ulrich from the "Lindenhaus" had been chief of the lynchers this time. People were supposed to have come from even Haslau and Märchthal, but no one dared to say more; the mysterious tribunal of the people deals its justice at all seasons, and no police force can cope with it.

Three Days Later.

The general belief that the gentle folks from Pesth would leave at once was mistaken. The false "Ritter" did not understand the dialect well enough to grasp the full meaning of the midnight address; and his landlord tried to make him think that the apparition had been merely a traditional procession, a rough, meaningless, practical joke, played by drunkards with no end in view but a pot of cider. But the next day when they found the silken church banner, which the Ritter had given, in rags, and saw the broken staff, it seemed to him that the matter was of some importance after all.

But he did not let his thought be known. From the day after the event he mixed with the people a good deal, was very gay and complaisant, and said that this year he intended to stay till the first snow fell. To-day he bought Perner's house and farm on account of the forest that goes with it. He seemed to have seen none of the

notices with the lynchers' judgment against him, which had been circulated everywhere. Most of the Torwald people made a show of being indignant at the midnight disturbance, which seemed meant to drive away monied people from the region. But I believe that in many cases this indignation was not very deeply felt. But the Ritter knew that nowadays money, not lynchers' law, rules the world; and the heads of the community applied to the chief officers at Altstadt for a police force for the Torwald.

19th December.

The last summer visitors have at last gone away. Even the Yark family have gone. Young Ritter Hermann alone was said to be still away shooting in the hills. Chamois-hunting in this weather!—in deep snow! How wearisome the luxurious life of these people must be that they should take so much trouble to give themselves trouble! On the other hand I like them for doing it. The hunters said the young gentleman was a dare-devil, and indeed I have often observed that those who know little of wild Nature are far less in awe of her than those who know her well.

For the rest we were alone again in the heart of the bitter Torwald winter. It was a relief,

but the people were changed. They no longer rose at three o'clock to thresh the corn. The shopkeeper said prosperity came from without, not from above. There was curling and card-playing all day and every day—and now they played for money; but the teacher did not care for cards. Physical strength and proficiency was his ideal. He was no longer strict as of old. He let the ordinary school-lessons go, and drilled the children. The peasants thought wood-cutting, ploughing and marrying was the best kind of drill, but the heads of the community thought otherwise.

Culture and progress had come to the Torwald.

23rd December.

Since midday there had been a rumour in the village that young Hermann von Yark had met with an accident. It was said that he fell over a precipice, and had yesterday been found by the wood-cutter, Hoisel. Three days ago, the young gentleman said, down at the Stullbach inn, that he was going sledging, and intended to stay over night at the "Tourists' House." He had not been seen since then, and nothing certain was known. There was a rumour of lynchers. The news was sent to Pesth at once—a terrible blow. Truly a year of misfortunes. May it please God

to send us His blessing from above! for, as I believe, no blessing comes from without.

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27th December.

It was true. The corpse was brought down again with the greatest difficulty. Herr von Yark came down to-day and raved like a madman when the miller Hainz told him. The weather was so bad that they could carry the coffin no further. It was left at the mill.

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28th December.

On this day, which belongs to innocent childhood, I will write in the chronicle of how the stroke of the hammer falls upon the hearts of the rich and poor. On the Holy night, just before matins, the miller Hainz came into the vestry and complained that they did not know how to approach Herr von Yark; he seemed completely outside himself, and all discussion made things worse instead of better. The dead body ought to have been brought away quickly, whereas the conveyance had remained stuck in the snow below, near the mill. They had placed the coffin in the wooden hut, and the poor father in the best room. They had offered him something to eat from their Christmas meal, at which he grew furious, and execrated them for being heartless people who could think at such a time of eating. He had

begun to quarrel with the sacred pictures on the wall. To believe in a God and holiness, he is reported to have said, that would be sheer blasphemy; it must be a fine kind of Divinity that permitted such things to happen! Then again he looked out of the window into the stormy night, and at the light placed near the corpse which pierced through between. Then the miller said—

“See, honoured sir, the blow has fallen upon others. For five years my wife and two daughters have slept upon the Hobelspäne. My all died in one day of low fever.

“What did you do at first?” asked the Ritter.

“I smoked and smoked, honoured sir.”

“How can men endure these things,” the Ritter said.

To which the miller said—

“Indeed, dear Herr, I know not myself. What can one do? Nothing avails against the Lord God.”

Thereupon the Ritter stamped his foot on the ground.

As I chanted the *Te Deum* before the altar, I saw the gentleman sitting upon his bench as he did in the summer-time.

But what a change! He had no longer the well-bred air of formerly. Instead, he stared uneasily around and looked earnestly at the little

cradle which is placed beneath the altar of St Anna. Upon it is inscribed—

“God has so loved the world that He gave His own son, so that any man believing on Him should not be lost but have eternal life.”

In the middle of High Mass the Ritter stood up, and went out with unsteady, almost staggering steps. No one went after him. Everyone remained kneeling.

After the service I hurried out to search for him. He must be somewhere quite near the church. I felt sure he would not have gone far in this snow. He was sitting huddled up upon the stone in a niche of the charnel house. To be so rich, and yet to have no other shelter than this house of the dead! With difficulty I got him into the parsonage. Regina brought hot tea, but he pushed it roughly aside and said quite stupidly, “Four grey horses, real Arabian ones, are a present for him, and he lies at the mill. Stone dead! Why has that come to me? I have always done good works and I am a Christian.”

“It comes to others, too;” I said; “they bear it in patience and pray. They believe in a resurrection and an eternal life.”

He laughed — a terrible laugh. “My Hermann will never rise again—never, never, never!” he shouted, and dug his fingers into his face. “O God, if I could but believe!”

"Do not lacerate your heart, sir," I said : "even the longing for faith brings us nearer to God. Faith takes many forms amongst the people of the earth. You will find it some day, and with it you will discover yourself—yourself and your sin."

He went on—"I cannot understand it. I have received the Sacrament, endowed the Church, given alms. But it is all nothing. I seem turned to ice." It might well be so, for his teeth chattered.

"Come and rest, dear sir," I urged, "and content yourself with the humble shelter of the village parsonage." He wished to be back at the mill at Unterschuttbach with Hermann, and it was only with much persuasion that I got him to bed. On Christmas morning, when the service was over, I found, on returning home, that my guest was pacing the floor restlessly, up and down, up and down. When Ottilie brought the supper he looked at her curiously, questioningly.

Soon he laid down his spoon and began again his lamentation. "Herr von Yark," I said, "you have had favours shown you. Now that you cannot any more give money to your son, give it to the poor. If at present faith gives you no consolation, perhaps love may give it you."

But his soul remained inconsolable. His beloved son, torn suddenly from his richly-blossoming life, lay upon his bier. The common

people gathered together at midnight and comforted their hearts with eternity. But for this man there was nothing but hate, doubt, and contempt.

I said—"I hear that your younger son, Mr Joseph, is an excellent man."

"Excellent! what do you mean by excellent. I have no use for him, he is nothing to me."

This brutal difference between child and child! Pain creates injustice. I had a bitter word on my tongue, but I restrained it. Jesus Christ! Thou hast brought into the world Love: give me of your bounty that I may console my guest with it.

Regina came at that moment to say that Katherine from Almau, whom I had sent for, had arrived. I bade Regina let her be seated, and give her food and drink. I then turned to my guest. "My Christ-day is by no means easy. Outside is a woman for whom I have sent, a servant to one of the peasants over in the mountain. This poor, poor creature. . . . No"—as he took out his purse—"no, no, as you know yourself, the dead cannot be awakened with gold. And if it were only death! It is a sad history—sadder than any I know. While still young, there was born to the girl—I believe the father was a hunter—a child who, given over to strangers, and first spoiled, and then neglected, turned out as might have been expected. After his first crime, followed by a stay in a penitentiary

for out-and-out-thieves, he went through every stage of deterioration, and at twenty-four years of age he was fully accomplished. I will now admit this servant.

“Do me the favour, Herr von Yark, of remaining quiet and drinking a glass of wine.”

Then I went into the adjoining room and left the door open. “I asked you to come here to-day because I had some news for you”—

The woman who was standing came forward.

“It must be of Peter?” she questioned slowly.

“Certainly it is. You know,” I said, “that he has been arrested for that murder and robbery.”

“Good God, yes! but it is not true!” she cried out. “As if there were no other bad people! A careless rascal, that he is; but that he had no part in this I would put my hand in the fire.”

“He has, however, been condemned. But,” I continued, “at present things are better for him; indeed, all is absolutely well with him.”

She bent forward upon her seat. “Most esteemed sir—I cannot quite understand. It would not be—can he be dead?”

Thereupon I said—“Katharina, when one looks upon the world, one can wish for nothing better than death—more particularly when one has already come to our Lord God and repented with a contrite heart, as Peter has.”

The maid-servant sat motionless. I had risen, but I sat down and took her hand in mine. "In the last night he thought of his mother—here is the letter. He asks your forgiveness that he should have had such an ending."

"Jesus, Maria and Joseph," the maid-servant cried out, with wide-open eyes. "Jesus, Maria and Joseph!" she cried again. She sprang up and staggered backwards. I was scarcely in time to protect her fall and put her back gently on the seat. Her head-cloth had slipped down into her neck, her reddish hair fell in loose ruffled strands about her corpse-like face.

For almost ten minutes we sat thus without uttering one word. At last I spoke.

"Our Lord Jesus sacrificed His life on the crucifix to expiate the sins of the world. There is the great distinction. He delivered others—your Peter himself. I can answer for it that your master will let you go three successive Fridays to church. On these Fridays I will have three sacred Masses read for the consolation of his soul and yours. And the people shall pray with us, and in one of my early sermons I will bid them act with good faith. See, my poor woman, yours is a heavy cross that God has given you, but He will finally set all right for you, and in heaven we shall treat one another better than we do on this unhappy earth."

As I thus spoke, her heart was unlocked, at the same moment that a hot stream of tears gushed forth, freeing it thereby from a terrible oppression. She knelt before me and buried her fingers in the folds of my gown which she pressed to her lips.

"Nay," said I, "you must not be uncontrolled, Katharina, you must be more composed. We shall soon be going to the afternoon service. Whenever you want a good word spoken for you, or there is any other opportunity for my good offices, whenever it may be, do not fail to come to me."

Afterwards at vespers Katharina sat right at the back in a dark corner of the church. She knelt and prayed quietly, and outwardly in no way differed from the others.

And my Herr von Yark who had heard and seen everything, said afterwards to me—"It is a fact, an actual fact? I could not have believed it. You have here the healing Christ. But as for myself, on whom the worst blow has fallen, not a spark has come to me."

"The worst?" I repeated. "My dear sir, this maid-servant has received the severest blow, and she bears it, because she has a valiant heart, because she is humble, not worldly, like the people of the world who believe in gold in place of God. I prayed for consolation for you as I did for this servant. I told you that we all felt sympathy for

you in your sorrow and would join our prayer to yours. But you turned away ; you transgress against God and man, even whilst your child, stiff and cold, sleeps in the mill."

He had bent his head upon the table. "My God!" he sobbed, "is it then my fault that I am unable to have faith?"

I pitied the man from my heart that he must remain outside the light. After vespers I went out with him, and in the presence of many people we gave the prayer of the Five Wounds of Christ before the coffin.

On the following day the road to Not was freed from snow, and a poor rich man drove away with his sad, sad burden.

May 1884.

The other day my little maid asked me if the photographer in Kushans might take her portrait. "I would like to send a picture to Luzian, Herr Pastor." I thought to myself, "If not now when? for no other age is more beautiful." I gave her permission and afterwards regretted it, for the photographer will exhibit it, and will even sell it for thirty kreutzers. People already ask who she is, and compliment her on her comeliness.

She herself laughs at it and does not pay much attention to people's flatteries. If these gentry only knew how neatly she ridicules them! I will not

write down all the things she says. I should never have thought her capable of it. Perplexed and surprised as we old folks are at the unexpected turn of events, the young take it quite naturally. Ottilie, too, behaves as if it had always been so and could not be otherwise, and thus securely and energetically treads her way amidst all the unheard-of innovations. The little rogue from the Rauhgraben speaks of nothing but the opening of the railway, and calls everything by its right name as if she were an engineer. And yet her simplicity, kindness and cheerfulness make her the true daughter of the Steinfranzel folk. She seems to be the rose on the thorn.

I feel suspicious of the schoolmaster. He is said to have bought a portrait from the photographer, but Regina keeps on saying that he will not be content with the picture. His muscles are improving every day with conscientious practice. He likes to turn up his sleeves and display them before others. In school he sometimes begins to box with the wildest youths, lifts a group of boys up on his shoulders and on his back, and builds, as it were, a high tower of screeching imps, with which he goes down into the garden. Sometimes he borrows a horse from Mr Joseph, who seems to like him, but he appears to have had several falls off its back into the fields. But now he can clear the river Eising on its back. The guests

tell funny tales of a smart school-teacher who is said to have cut off the tip of a townsman's nose in a duel out in Nesselschachen, because the townsman had called him schoolmaster instead of school-teacher. Well, of course, that must be avenged. The tip of that nose was buried in Schachen; the gentleman departed, the conqueror keeps silence, and if anyone attempts to tease him about it, he proves to him that the ground is hard.

I cannot help thinking of Rolf. The fellow is lucky. He has been discharged from his regiment, in consideration of his being the smith's only son. Thank God for that! In case of war he would certainly have been shot in accordance with martial law; so here, too, a great danger has successfully passed. Now he can let his bristles grow as they like, wild bear that he is. But they do not grow. When he comes down from the Dreibrunn forest to change his books, his fair head of hair is carefully brushed, and he is as shy and well-behaved as a novice. Last time he was just going to tell me something, when Ottilie came into the room quite accidentally. He stuck in the middle of his sentence and was quite confused.

"So you are bringing me back the book about Johannes Huss," I said, in order to help him out of his difficulty. "Wasn't Huss a monster?"

"I can't exactly say so," he said, with some inward excitement. "Huss was in the right,

when he. . . . He was more of a real Christian than. . . . He said if a man only had a Christian disposition, even if he were not baptised. . . . And as for the worthless man, even if a whole kettleful of holy water had been poured over him, a whole kettle . . . he would still be the Antichrist, and he made no exceptions, not even for the bishop or the Pope. . . .”

“Rolf!” I exclaimed, thinking that the girl had bewildered him. “Ottillie, I believe Regina is calling you.” And when she had gone out I added: “But, Rolf, how have you been reading that book? This very book flatly contradicts all that you have just been saying.”

“It can’t do that,” he said. “Christ has said just the same things as Huss.” So it was not the girl after all.

“My dear Rolf, if you persist in misunderstanding the books, I shall not lend you any more. You are too much alone; you brood too much. You must come down. Did your father ever brood? He used to work and pray hard, went amongst the people, and had a wife and child. You must come out of that forest.”

He shook his head. “If the Antichrist were not here. . . .”

For a moment I did not know what to reply to this. It gave me a shock to hear it suddenly loudly and clearly expressed.

"But is he not in your forest also?" I asked. "You have cut yourself off from all worldly affairs, you have good Catholic books to advise and instruct you, you ought to bear your good father's memory in your heart; and yet you have gone astray and are talking like a — like a" —

"You can say the word, Father. Like a — Christian. I do not know whether the grace has been given me to be one indeed, but I have the good will to live in accordance with Christ's commandment."

Imagine hearing such a thing from a man of the woods! I shook hands with him: "We must be humble. All human wisdom and all learned cogitations are of no avail. May the Lord let His light shine upon us. If you expect to find it in your forest, go home to the forest, Rolf — home, I say, for sometimes I feel as if" — I felt like adding — "as if I wished to go with you." Instead of this young man requiring guidance and comfort from his priest, the priest would like to follow him. . . .

3rd July 1884.

I have heard much about thunderstorms in the high mountains. Yesterday I was in one.

In the morning a boy was sent to ask me to come up to the Selchwiese, to see a shepherd

there. The Selchwiese is a piece of mountain pasture-land situated between the Dreispitz and the Reckenstein. A gentleman from the town was standing on the Eising bridge, and he congratulated us on the fine day. The old pitch-burner was kneeling at his gate, and after he had quickly crossed himself after the blessing he called after us—"You'll get into an awful storm to-day. The cat licked itself early this morning." As I walked up through the forests after the messenger, and carried the sacred vessels, it was so oppressively hot, even in the shade, that I was often obliged to stand still to get my breath. Not the slightest breeze, not a bird-call, not an ant on the tree-roots! From Reschanger we could see that lead-grey clouds were rising above the Hohe Rauh, but its highest peaks still gleamed pure and white, so that the forest behind us looked pale yellow by contrast. When we crossed the Hulschlag, the sunshine had already disappeared. The sky was grey but studded with black, white and sulphur-yellow clouds, and streaks of mist were falling down the mountain-slopes. We entered by way of the Schutterhoehe, where the dwarf pines with their long lichens grow on the healthy soil. The boughs of these trees have been so torn and twisted by the storm in their growth, that they have all turned towards the east. But to-day not a twig was moving.

Here it suddenly grew so dark that the light in the messenger's lantern shone as if in the twilight. He took great care of the little flame, for it had been lit at the hanging lamp in church. Great drops began to fall, and suddenly we were enveloped in mist, that was lashed through the trees by a rising wind. It lightened several times, and we saw the lightning fall in yellow-white streaks; there was a sudden rushing as if a great waterfall were somewhere in the air. We had been walking so quickly that the perspiration dropped from our brows, but the boy said that we were some distance yet from the sick shepherd's hut. And now it began to pour. The storm drove ice and water into our faces, whirled through the dried-up branches of the trees and tore up the sod. Once I had to lean against a tree in order not to be thrown down. My surplice and stole were soaked full of water like a bath sponge, and the water from my cap was dripping down my neck. Suddenly I heard, "Excuse me, Father," and a heavy cloak was thrown over my shoulders. It was Mr Joseph, with his gun and hunting-bag, who had wrapped me in his mackintosh and then hurried on to find a shelter. The lightning flickered dimly through the dense fog and the thunder roared heavily and loud. "It's coming on full pelt," said the boy. Then Joseph sprang towards me and dragged me under a pine-tree.

It was the same that towers above the dwarf trees and can be seen from our church. It stands on the Schutterhoehe and points to the skies like a spire. I wanted to remind him of the danger from lightning. But I was inside before I knew it, and there was no choice. The tree was hollow, and there was room for all three of us. I set the Sacred Host down on the ground, the messenger put his lantern beside It, and we two knelt down in front of it. Mr Joseph probably said his prayers too ; he looked out into the open, where the dance was just beginning. The rigid trees shrieked and groaned in the storm until we were almost deafened by the din. Hailstones were flying in every direction, and every stone rebounded as it fell. Masses of undergrowth, water and mist were washed over the ground, and although it was almost level the torrents of water lashed whole heaps of hail before them as they went. A rushing waterfall came from the tree-tops. Several times the lightning dazzled us, several times our fir-tree swayed in the thunder blast, after which the flow of water always renewed its violence. The ice rushed quickly on, and the lopped boughs follow more slowly in the rear.

It may have lasted for half an hour before the elements had exhausted themselves. The wind went down, the hail turned into a gentle rain, and

a strong odour of wood-resin filled the frosty air. We prepared to go on, and stepped out on to the crisp hail that lay foot-deep in places. When Mr Joseph picked up one of the hailstones, which was about the size of a nut, and broke it open, three rings were visible where the break had been made. "There," he said, "you see this stone has come down through three layers of air." And as I was still gazing at the mists that now curled lazily round, the boy cried—"The tree's burning." And we saw that the top of the tree in whose hollow inside we had found shelter was ablaze. The boy put down his lantern on a heap of hail, and raising both hands towards the sacred vessel, he cried aloud as if transfigured—"Christ our Lord, Thou art indeed kind, not to have let us be killed."

Joseph looked somewhat puzzled, and did not know whether to marvel more at the lightning that had struck the tree without damaging one of those who stood beneath it, or at the pious gratitude of the boy.

When we reached the first clearings near the Selchwiese, the mists rose and a wide winter landscape lay before us. All the fields were covered with a white layer, traversed in places by many armed mountain torrents and melting snowdrifts. Wild waters whirled their clay-brown floods through the gorges. Fragments hung from the

pinces and larches, and the leaf-bearing trees, particularly the maple and the mountain ash, stood bare as they do at Christmas-time. Many trees were split from top to bottom, and their ruins have been hurled some distance away. The mists rise again and again from the ice-fields, and a fresh storm is gathering above the high mountains, although the first has scarcely spent itself above the Beilerstein.

After I had thanked Mr Joseph for his kindly services, he made his way towards the shooting-box up on the Dreispitz, and we reached the shepherd's hut at last. Not a single pane was whole, and the wind was moaning through the house. As soon as the sick man saw me, he raised his clenched fist and said with a hoarse barking voice—"Priest, remember what I say, the weather is bewitched. The old witch did that : it's Liesel, my sister-in-law."

"Friend," I said, "if you wish to receive the most holy Sacrament, that I have brought for you, you must not talk like that. The Almighty God has allowed this thunderstorm, and poor old Liesel is a child of God like all the rest, in spite of her hump."

But the man muttered from under his coverlet—

A child of God? that's all right, that's all right. Then let Him be punished in His children, so that He may remember it. What am I to do with my

oxen and calves, now that all the grass has been stamped into the ground by the storm? You go away ; nothing will do me any good now."

The old man who was speaking thus was sick unto death, and I had to use a great deal of persuasion until his bad temper vanished and he was able to receive the sacraments of the dying with devotion.

Then I went back into the valley in the garb of the old shepherd. For as my clothes were soaked through, he lent me his coarse woollen ones, also his heavy laced boots, his broad-brimmed felt hat and his great red umbrella, and it was thus I reached home in the evening, to the blank dismay of my womenfolk.

The first thing I did this morning after Mass was to look up towards the Schutterhoehe. It is still snow-white. The old pine-tree rises towards the sky just as it always has done. Not even the lightning has been able to harm it.

4th July.

The day before yesterday's storm has wrought much havoc. Hundreds of snowdrifts are said to have detached themselves from the mountains since the soil is entirely soaked. Many a stony desert extends throughout the green valley, and many rivers have changed their beds. Although it did not hail in the valley, there are mountains of

ice piled up in front of the hotel, for they have been carried down there by the floods. The guests are said to have moaned and lamented madly while the storming and cracking and roaring went on. The peasants who lost all they possessed remained calm. To-day the sun is shining, but the wild torrents are still thundering down the distant ravines, and the Eising pours its muddy brown waters through the valley.

9th July.

Last night Regina knocked at my door, telling me not to be frightened, but there was a thief at the window. I hurried down the steps into the yard, where a ladder had been set up against Otilie's window. Ruprecht had locked the yard-gate, and was standing beside it with an axe. "Axe?" I cried; "you don't want an axe. Bring me my stick." Then a man slipped down the ladder, and before he had touched the ground Ruprecht had seized him by the collar. When Regina came with the light we saw that it was Hoisel the wood-cutter, that suspicious character, who is now in Herr von Yark's service. "Mathias," I called to him. He went down on his knees. "I beg your pardon, sir. I should have confessed it—I should have confessed everything! I cannot help myself—I am so fond of the girl."

"Shall I give him a few strokes?" asked Ruprecht.

“Lock the yard-gate more carefully another time.”

“Then I shall have to climb over the roof,” moaned the wretched man. “She’s done for me. I shall die like a dog if I can’t have her. God the Father meant me to have her, that’s what it is. I’m not a wicked man, and what I do wrong I always confess.”

But now I made him take himself off as quickly as he could. There was no question of further sleep that night. Ottilie sat shivering beside Regina’s bed all night. And she was scolded too, as if it were her fault, although we know that he is after every girl. My anger was raging against this monster, this hypocrite, who always appeals to the sacraments. Whenever I see him in church I feel suspicious.

What kind of priest am I? Am I too neglectful—too indulgent? Is my teaching insufficient? Is something else about me not as it should be? One of my parishioners reads the words of Christ and misinterprets them. Another prays with his mouth and curses in his heart. Another again observes the outward ceremonies and has no faith. Yet another sacrifices at the altar and deceives the people. And this man thinks he can cast off his works of darkness by confessing them. Well, let him confess to me. Let him confess that he has the peasant woman in Schwarzaeu and the unfor-

tunate Tobias Steger on his conscience. Let him tell me about the shepherdess who went over the mountain-side. I wonder whether he has got any more sins on his conscience. I shall carry God's seal to justice. It is beyond my power. I shall deliver it to justice. The mills of God grind too slowly for me in Hoisel's case.

It seems as if a soul sickness had come upon the whole world, as if the sunlight that otherwise shines down in its mercy and grace upon the green woodlands were poisoned. Sometimes my soul is sorrowful even unto death.

1st August.

A workman has met with an accident at the railway bridge near Unterschuttbach. While blasting a stone a piece of it flew into his chest and is said to have pierced the lung. Thinking that perhaps one might be able to have a look into his soul, I went down to him. I asked whether he desired the consolations of religion. He was lying on the straw in a large shed. He was a young man still, and with his half-fixed eyes he gazed wearily at death. I tried to comfort him, but he muttered—"I know what's the matter with me. The doctor has already told me." I asked him whether there was anything that the doctor could not do for him but perhaps the Saviour might. With quivering lips

he muttered—"Neither God nor man can help me."

So I had to go away again. Usually the need of God manifests itself on a person's deathbed. And now? Is he to pass away without repentance and without longing? The light of God no longer shines on earth.

On my way home I met young Herr von Yark. He had caught up to me in his high boots and asked me politely whether he might accompany me. His father is away on business, and Joseph has to superintend the building of a bridge at the Keilerstein. They build different bridges from ours—three times as high and five times as long, and all of hewn stone. The wild torrents cannot do any damage. They are felling timber over in the Raig mountains and digging for coal; that is why the bridge is required. I thought the young man would begin to do as his father does, and speak of the advantages that the valley of the Torwald derives from the summer houses, the mines and the railway. On the contrary, Mr Joseph seemed to notice that I felt uncomfortable. He said that perhaps I should prefer to be alone and escape from the strangers who now flood the quiet Alpine valley. He was really sorry, he said, for all those contented and old-fashioned lives, but the world was in a state of change. Rotten planks

last longest when they are carried along by the stream.

I thought to myself : "That's the way they talk and try to justify themselves." But he added—"I do not like it either, Father. I believe I understand you, and if I had my way I would not have the Torwald modernised."

I could not help answering—"But you have your way."

He said : "If we don't do it, other people will, and they will perhaps do it even worse in the end. Do you see, Father?" He picked up a rust-brown clod of earth, that might have fallen off a cartload into the street. "Do you know what that is?"

"That is a dirty stone," I said.

"That is the treasure of the Torwald," he said, "and everyone who finds it will utilise it to the utmost. It is iron ore. It will create a sensation in the Torwald."

"I understand nothing about it. I am only concerned about the natives, as many as there are left of them."

Whereupon the young man—"As far as I am personally concerned, I have made up my mind to preserve the old customs and views of these good folk as much as possible."

"I quite believe you, sir, but what if these good folk have ceased to exist when every-

thing has been lost, because it has been uprooted?"

While we were talking, I saw a young man walking rapidly down from St Mary's. He carried a little stick, wore a little bag slung across his shoulder, and was certainly not one of the tidiest, for he had not turned up his black trousers over his boots. They were almost dragging in the dust. It was Luzian the student. He seemed shy, and apparently wished to avoid me—perhaps on account of my companion.

"How's this?" I called to him. "Have you holidays already? Have you been to the rectory? Were you coming to meet me?"

He muttered something about his parents in the Rauhgraben, about his sister, and about gratitude and seeing me again. I did not pay very much attention, thinking that we should talk it all over later. But before I was aware of it, he raised his grey hat and went off.

Intentionally I now began to tell the rich gentleman about the student, saying that he was a very good and talented scholar, the child of poor parents, and he had just passed through the seminary in Alpenzell. Now he wished to study for the priesthood, and it was to be hoped that wealthy patrons would enable him to carry out his aims, as he had no means of continuing his studies. It would be a day of rejoicing for the

old people of the Torwald if one of their very own folk read his first Mass in St Mary's church.

"Do not worry about that, Father," said young Herr von Yark, "I will see to that. Whatever changes occur in the world, we shall always want good priests. How many years must he continue his studies? Three, you say? Tell him to come and see me in the holidays. I shall be pleased to be indebted to you."

"Indebted to me—how?"

He stood still, raised his arm slightly, as if he wished to grasp my hand, but did not do so. "You have been very kind to me, Father. You have not let me feel that you make a difference between me and my father."

"What difference do you mean?" I asked.

"You know," he said, "that my family has joined your church, and that I have not done so. If my father had honest reasons for doing so, I have equally honest reasons for not doing so. I must explain what I mean. You lay stress upon remaining true to one's traditions as regards life and doctrine. If you ask me, 'Do you believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?' I am forced to answer that I do not know. If you ask me to accept a new faith, I am forced to answer, 'No. If I cannot even hold fast the faith of my fathers, how am I to incur the responsibilities of a strange one? It would not meet with your approval.'"

"It does, it does," I cried without thinking. I was so pleased with his frankness that for the moment I forgot my office. As if he were afraid that I might reverse my decision, the gentleman bade me farewell at the next parting of the way. He did it hastily but warmly. Why should he care for the opinion of an old Catholic priest?

Iron ore. Is that going to bring new disaster? I do not understand. Gold is worse than iron, it seems to me. But now I must see about the student.

30th August.

It is customary amongst the people to keep a tool that has severely wounded anyone, for an everlasting memento, either in the house or in a church. I will keep this letter for the same reason and will lay it in this book. I received it to-day :—

VERY REVEREND FATHER,—Since we met in the road, and I behaved so badly, I have been entirely restless. At first I walked on, and knew not whither. Away over the Alps. They are said to be fine, but I do not like them. My travelling companions are discord and self-reproach. The wrong that I have been forced to do my benefactors is unpardonable, and yet also unavoidable. For more than six months I have been fighting within myself. It would have been better after all if I had told you about it then. But I had not the courage. I cannot become a priest. I shall be able to provide for myself after the education I have had. I cannot help not wishing to become a Catholic priest. I am not in

love. I do not know what has happened. I have been to see my parents but have told them nothing, and I dared not face Ottilie. But I must confess it to you; you will forgive me, my benefactor. I will not appear before you until you will be able to see that I am worthy of your care and kindness. Only do not forsake my parents.

LUZIAN STELZENBACHER.

ZURICH, 27th August 1884.

The poor girl has been crying all night. For years she has daily said an Our Father, so that we might live to be present at her brother's first Mass. And now this letter has come.

Of course he is not in love. He is a foolish boy, and someone has put a bee in his bonnet. And now the rascal is vagabondising through the wide world, probably without shoes to his feet and with nothing to eat. I should like to have him at the rectory, if only for one hour, give him a full feed and then a rest. . . .

31st August.

After service to-day, when Steinfranzel was kneeling beside his family grave, as he always does on Sunday, I went to him and told him as gently as I could. He struck his hands together with a clap, and cried—"There you see!" Then he walked along beside the wall, as if he wished to examine the crumbling stone, and muttered—"I thought so—I thought so. Listen, Father; we

will not say anything to my wife. Let her have her young priest as long as possible. Four years are a long time. Who knows whether we should have lived to see it after all. O you silly fellow, so now you've gone off."

After that he returned to the Rauhgraben as cheerfully as ever.

If I only knew why. If he only knew himself. Has he already observed that we are not as good as we used to be? Has he heard that things are coming to an end? For that is what they say. He is twenty years of age. Boy, I know why you do not want to wear a cowl better than you do yourself. If you give way to these reasons, they will gain the mastery over you. If you do not give way, they will soon dwindle away, and finally they will cease to exist. If it were only different among us Catholic priests. Did I not once write about it? And they sent me to St Mary's in the Torwald.

Yesterday I reported to the abbot about Luzian. The deserter must be hunted for and found.

5th September 1884.

The abbot writes—

"Don't look for him; don't force him. When he is reduced to skin and bone, he will come back of his own accord."

It may be, but I don't think so.

5th September 1884.

So he is coming to-morrow. The whole valley is wild with excitement. I do not think that even ten persons have stayed at home in their far mountain huts. To-day already every one has come. Every house is a public-house, and even under the trees they are selling beer. Torwald is like a great fair stretching from Unter- to Oberschuttbach. The houses are decorated with flags, and the hall has a flagstaff as high as a church spire. Zaunstieg, the churchwarden, seems to have hoisted all the red and blue clothes and women's petticoats and white shirts he can lay hands on, for there is a waving mass of colour over his house. The stations at Ober- and Unterschuttbach are almost hidden from view by wreaths and trails. St Mary's itself has no station, and I have taken no notice of the churchwarden's request that I should hoist a flag on the church tower. To-morrow evening there is to be a public rejoicing, but not in the church. If only the good Kornstock could have been recalled to life!

All the walls bear great advertisements with this announcement: "In celebration of the opening of the Railway, Michael Kornstock's great *May Symphony* will be performed at the Concert Hall at Torwald."

6th September 1884.

This day has passed too. Now we are linked on to the great world by means of two iron lines. These rails, these iron lines, are humanity's signs of equality, I once heard say. On the 6th of September the first train arrived in the Torwald. It seemed to me, as I looked out from the loft of the Gral farm, as if I had never seen a train before in all my life. For I was looking with the eyes of my parishioners, who had never experienced one before. For it is not a mere sight; it is an experience. It burns through the brain like Fate, it alters the blood. People who vowed they would not take a step out of their way on account of that tomfoolery have come from great distances to see the first train arrive. The windows of Hotel Victoria, opposite the station, are crowded with people. The landlord demanded admission and the peasants gladly paid for it.

Crooked Christl has been hurrying up and down ever since the morning shouting at people: "Say your prayers, say your prayers that it may not come." And when the black monster was seen at the curve, and approached steaming and snorting, he shrieked wildly—"The hellish dragon, now it's come! Say your prayers, good people. Now it has come with all its might!"

The people were surprised that the steam

carriage did not shake but came along smoothly and quietly.

"But it snorts like the devil," remarked one man, "and no wonder—if you look at all the houses it's dragging along after it."

Then they began to shout. All my parishioners, even the opponents of the railway waved their hats and handkerchiefs and screamed as loud as they were able. "Hip, hip, hurrah!" they cried, as the train with its eight wreathed carriages drew up inside the station. A number of strangers alighted. One man gave a speech from the step, but the shouting, music and salutes drowned every word. Even I felt a thrill; things like that do warm one. And yet I cannot help asking myself what is to happen next? The train has come too late to spoil the people. If it had come a few years ago, I should probably have said with conviction that the wolf had entered the sheep-fold.

The sixty-seven-year-old Gral farmer and his mother sat beside me. The old woman did nothing yesterday and to-day but repeat prophecies which were circulated in this district in the time of her youth. "A time will come when they will hang heaven's lightning on to poles, and will build roads of iron. Then fire-spitting dragons will come, and they will be so great, that seven times seven knights will ride upon them, and

then the end of the world will come." Others again had foretold that when the dragon appeared, people would have wings on their feet, and the walls would have ears, and flames would break forth from the flowers, and flames would not ascend but would go down to the earth.

Someone had ordered a jug of cider. Several people who were sitting there drank the health of the dragon that had made its appearance and will be visible now every day until the remotest times. Even the aged Gral mother raised her mug with a hasty hand, and stood as erect as her little withered-up body would allow. Her son pulled her sleeve : "Let us go, mother ; let us go to bed."

"Now?" said the old woman in a loud voice. "Why, you stupid boy, we're just beginning to have some fun." When she had said that, she sank back against the wall, and when we wanted to ask her what was the matter—she was no longer living.

The old woman is dead. Soon everyone knew what had happened, and many thought the news even stranger than the entry of the steam horse. She was a hundred and odd years old. We had almost forgotten that she would die.

I was not at the great banquet, but the thought of Kornstock's music enticed me into the hall. It was unpleasant to me to go, and yet when I tried to stay at home, my limbs began to tremble

as if I myself were Kornstock. The young canary in its cage fluttered and cried : "Go down, go down." So I went down. The great hall was full of people in festal mood. Some were summer guests and new arrivals. Herr von Yark had ordered the band from some distant place. There were about thirty men, some of them belonging to this place, some of the pupils of Kornstock, and there were several lady singers. Not a single note, not a movement of the audience escaped me. Trembling hope and hot fear alternated within me. The whole performance was an indescribable torture to me. When passages of the greatest beauty were being played, I felt the worst anxiety as to whether they were understood. First the applause was too slight, and when it grew louder I was indignant at the unworthy interruptions of those heavenly melodies. I understand nothing about music : I can only feel it, and I know whether it pains me or soothes me, and no thought of mine can change or alter this. I do not know what makes these melodies and harmonies touch my heart in such a delicious way. When the piece was finished at last, an unprecedented storm of applause broke loose. It seemed never-ending, and as they had heard that the artiste was a native of the Torwald, they never wearied of shouting : "Kornstock, Kornstock, forward !" In this transport of excitement I stood up from my seat to

bow. But in that very moment I remembered that I was not the right man, and in order to say something, for silence had been enjoined, I said—"Ladies and Gentlemen,—Michael Kornstock is dead!"

These few words created a sensation such as I should never have believed possible. A very earthquake went through the hall—I might even call it a heartquake. They seem to have felt a reproach in my words: "You neglected him, you let him perish—now it is too late." The excitement is said to have lasted some time. I went out into the starlit night. And as I passed the schoolhouse and the lime tree where he was so fond of sitting and resting, rejoicing, hoping and despairing, I said: "Kornstock, to-day I have for once taken your place. It is heavenly indeed, but it is hot." He did not answer, and the peace of night fell around that lime tree.

The applause was a real thing, it was not a matter of mere clapping. After the concert a collection was made in order to erect a monument in honour of the composer of the *May Symphony*. But I think only ten out of every hundred have really appreciated the beauty of the music; the rest only imitated the others. And only ten out of every hundred followed their own inward impulse in giving to the collection; the others

gave for outward reasons. Herr von Yark distinguished as usual, and next year the monument is to be erected. Michael, if you had only lived to see it! No, it would have been unnatural. A bronze statue can only be produced when the clay model has been destroyed.

A modern health resort like this might well be called a lunatic asylum. Not only are most of the patients possessed with a mania for doing all the things that make life dull, superficial and uninteresting, but they also endeavour to escape from everything that might enhance its depth and value.

But there are some very queer folk, and I myself sometimes come in contact with one or the other of them. There is a lawyer come down in the world, a mystic, who says that he has been in the world ever so many times, and will come again just as often, for matter and mind are indestructible, and eternity is long.

A young doctor is of opinion that love of humanity and morality are the basest and worst of human aberrations, and that only might and power are virtues; that consideration for others, such as pity, love, self-sacrifice, are miserable and vicious weaknesses that ought to be extirpated together with their root—Christianity.

Such are the people who frequent the Torwald

in this summer-time. The first keen blast of autumn blows them all away, as it does the beech and maple leaves that have fallen off the trees. And the bare dry boughs remain.

I have long fought against the thought of leaving. I wished to die here. I feel at home amongst the mountains and I love the people. But my first parishioners are scattered. Everywhere nothing but strange faces, strange life. If the Torwald really wants a priest, he must be made of different stuff from what I am. He ought to be made of iron. I am no good. I shall ask the bishop to transfer me to a different parish. . . .

9th August 1885.

Recent events seem once again almost too strange to be true.

A few days ago I had already heard about some bold beggar who was sitting under the lime tree in the school-garden. He wore a grey shabby town garb, and a cloth cap with a leather peak covered and concealed him. Sandor wanted to give him a small silver coin, but the old man refused it, and asked for anything that might be left over from dinner. As he was still there in the evening, gazing at the passers-by without begging from them, the schoolmaster called to

him from the window and asked him for whom he was waiting. "For nobody," he replied—but it was so nice sitting on the stone pedestal, and if he might ask the schoolmaster one favour, might he be allowed to sleep in the porch, or under the roof, or anywhere in the immediate neighbourhood of the schoolhouse. At the same time the beggar was in the best of humours, but he behaved uncivilly to a lady who wanted to place a wreath of oak-leaves on the monument. He is said to have embraced this admirer of the dead composer and to have kissed her on the cheek.

To-day Ruprecht came into my room and said : "I can't make it out. He isn't dead after all, and yet folks said he was dead."

"Who?"

"The old schoolmaster, Kornstock."

"Why, he has been dead for ever so long!"

"He is sitting down below," said the man, hastily, "go and look, Father; it is he—he is sitting by the lime tree. I have never had such a fright as seeing a man who died so long ago."

I ran down. From the road I could already see him cowering there. I saw his beard falling in two points on his chest; and the face?—Yes, it was he. He raised his shade, and how his eyes flashed! He beckoned with his hand, and cried loudly and cheerily, "Why, there he is coming along, my dear, good pastor!"

"Kornstock, am I mad?—or are you really still alive?"

"If I were dead I should not have the right to be sitting here," he replied, with a cheery voice.

"That's true, schoolmaster. You are really alive then."

"Yes," he said, and jumped up, "I wanted to outlive myself, and that's why I'm not dead."

"A thousand welcomes, then, old friend. Of course, you must live. And wherever have you been all this long time?"

Forthwith began an animated conversation, and I learned that he had founded a school of music in the capital as a pastime, until folks should think fit to appreciate his compositions. "Of course, I expected that," he smiled, rapping the stone monument with his bent finger.

"So that is why you hid yourself, you rascal?"

"I did not hide," he ejaculated hastily. "If anyone had inquired after me, I should have reported myself; but when I heard quite accidentally that I was supposed to have died ever so long ago, and that a monument had been erected in my honour in the great town of Torwald, I set out as quickly as possible to see if it were really true. But they did not recognise me," he whispered. "I have been sitting here for the last two days, and no one has recognised me. They shall get to know me, Father. If they have put up this

stone in honour of my *May Symphony*, what will they do after my newest work, *Oranda*? It will have a monument as high as St Stephen's tower. I have five new operas in my box."

I dared not ask him in which hotel he was staying and where he was dining, so I just took him by the arm and led him into the rectory. His body was as light as a dried-up skeleton. He tripped hurriedly along at my side, and his clothes, of which probably not a single garment had been made for him, hung loosely on his body. My two women crossed themselves when I took Kornstock into the house in this condition, and not till he had thoroughly emptied plates and dishes did Regina take this as a sufficient proof of his bodily existence.

And what a crowd there was in the evening! Everyone was talking about the risen composer, everyone came up to see him. The space in front of the rectory was full of people, and when Kornstock showed himself at the window, there were shouts of admiration and homage. Several of the gentlemen made their way in to take him to the hall, where a festival in his honour had promptly been arranged. I opened my clothes-chest and whispered loudly in his ear that he would have to appear in black, and as he had not brought his own best clothes, mine were at his disposal. "Yes, yes, I've got them on," he

cried ; "these are all right, if you will be kind enough to lend me a paper collar." Being a priest, I had nothing but my stole collar. Well, then, he could quite well go as he was, he said.

I took part in the Kornstock festival until midnight, and heartily rejoiced at the warm reception that was given to the composer's songs. It seemed so strange to be honouring a man in person to whom one had erected a monument only a short time ago, thinking him dead. Kornstock was beside himself with joy ; he made one speech after the other, one full of humility, the other of artiste's pride, and finally he said that they had put up the monument too soon : they would have to pull it down again. If he was worth nothing, he did not deserve one at all ; but if he had really composed such operas as he would yet produce, they would require more marble from the quarries of Carrara. Peals of laughter greeted this witty speech. For a long time Kornstock kept to his principle of drinking no wine, but finally he gave in, and after midnight he was drinking champagne like water. He said he was already dead, and in Elysium spirit joins spirit. Some of his merry boon-companions escorted him on his way home. They halted at the monument, and in unsteady accents he delivered a wildly exaggerated speech in praise of the great master of music, Michael Kornstock. He kept repeat-

ing the same words over and over again, until he was interrupted by a general howl, and the whole company crowded close round the old man as he toppled over on the ground. Then they carried him to the rectory, for he was fast asleep, and we put him to bed as if he were a dead man.

I cannot make it out. He is not all right. He wanders round with head in air like a startled fawn. Wherever there is singing, he pricks his ears, shakes his head, and beats the empty air with his arms and goes on. Some days he sits from early morning till late at night beside the monument. The school-children are frightened of him and avoid him. From the schoolhouse he can hear their repetition, but he takes no notice. Only when they sing he quickly raises his head, but lets it drop again almost immediately, for they are not singing his songs. One or the other of the visitors sometimes stops to speak to him, generally condescendingly, patronisingly, or even slightingly, but he is quite serious and gives enthusiastic answers. By daylight his clothes hardly tempt them to give another Kornstock festival in a hurry.

As far as one can tell, he seems to have been very poor all these years without realising it himself. His music-school in the capital was carried on by means of visits. He went from house to

house giving piano-lessons to the children of the poorer classes. "Now I have given up teaching," he says. "I am going to take a rest at last."

He asked Regina for a broom, with which he daily sweeps the sandy space round the monument. He seems to have made it his vocation for the remainder of his days. I feel quite wretched when I see the poor creature sitting beside the stone, while all the grand people who so enthusiastically subscribed towards the monument for the dead composer heedlessly or even contemptuously pass the living man. Some of them throw him small pieces of money. At first he let them lie in the sand, but now he picks them up. He has the intention of paying me for his board and lodging. He lives at the rectory, and I made but two conditions: firstly, that he should play the organ when I say Mass, and secondly, that he should wear one of my old suits. He replied—"Master Kornstock is not going to play the organ any more, and he is wearing his very best clothes."

So he sits beside his monument and watches whether anyone is going to bring a fresh wreath for the stone; for all the old wreaths are withered, and if the stone is too hard for him he can rest on his laurels. This is what happens if monuments are thoughtlessly put up to artistes before they are dead.

1st September.

Up in the ironworks a fly-wheel burst asunder, and tore Augustini's two legs from his body. They say he fell down without a sound, just like a snow-man whose legs have thawed. But he is alive, and there is hope of his recovering and crawling about for the rest of his life a miserable cripple. Now he has time to make himself into a god, and the earth into heaven. I should like to go and see him and to comfort him, but I am afraid he might misinterpret it. So I will wait until he sends for me.

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He has not sent for me. They say he is of good courage, but I cannot believe it. And yet it is so. He sits in a little cart, propped up with straw pillows, so that he cannot fall over. Sometimes he is taken out a little and looks out into the sunshine, and makes all sorts of funny shadow-pictures on the white wall with his fingers. He reads too from the secular poets. He lives with a young woman who has only got one eye. She looks after him, and plays to him on the zither, and sings to it.

One day Kornstock passed the house. When he heard his song, "I am a Mighty Gentleman," being sung indoors, he rushed in, and beating

time with both arms he joined the other two and sang—

“I give myself the credit,
And sing a song that’s fine :
I am a mighty gentleman
And all the world is mine.

“How merry ’tis to wander,
Of care there is no sign,
The sad world’s for the others—
The fair free world is mine.”

If beggars and cripples enjoy singing such songs, then heaven can’t be locked yet. There must be the special grace of God dwelling in the hearts of these poor folk, of which others know nothing, and in which they themselves do not even believe.

I will no longer pity them. Who knows how much closer to the heart of God they are than we ourselves?

Winter, 1886.

As long as the visitors are here we notice our simple-mindedness, and when they are gone our poverty is evident. During the winter the country-houses stand deserted, frosty and nailed up with planks. Here and there some Bohemian or Hungarian caretaker lives in the basement. The railway and factory officials do the same, and everywhere there are Italian workmen. In the public-houses they play cards ; some of the people

have plenty of money, and others are in want of food. Since the railway came we have been told that there could never be a famine again. But the railway has not brought a single sack of corn hitherto for anyone who could not afford to buy it, and they do not share it as in the smith's time.

On Sundays there is drinking and quarrelling between the natives and the strangers, and the policemen—there are eight of them now in the Torwald—find Sunday by no means a day of rest. Most of all I am grieved that the natives who are now scattered in the mountain huts are no longer so diligent and willing at their work. In former times they were interested in their crops, their cattle and their forest trees, but now they think of nothing but money value and shopman's wares. Money is their first and last thought. As they cannot have money for nothing, work has become a necessary evil, and as money is no good if kept in a bag, they spend it. A man who tries to save is laughed at and made fun of.

Our peasants buy cheap foreign materials in the shops for clothing. The old expensive dress can only be worn by the rich. So the townsfolk walk about the Torwald in leather breeches, and the peasants wear cotton trousers. The world seems to be standing on its head—only it has not got one.

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Schoolmaster Sandor has introduced skating and skying after the Norwegian fashion. He has also grown musical, he says. During the long winter evenings, he says, he plays glass instruments, and Gluck is his special favourite. He means that he likes putting his wine-bottle to his mouth and hearing the wine run down his throat with a sound of gluck!—gluck!—gluck! Kornstock has a perfect horror of this man who is his successor.

Kornstock still lives in a garret at the rectory, but is never at home all day. When he is not sitting in the snow beside his monument, begging for alms, he is driving Augustini about. He fastens himself to the little sledge in which the cripple cowers, and then they drive about from one village to another. Augustini is much attached to the strange old man, but he does not like being driven about by him, for Kornstock has several times taken the helpless creature to quiet places and whistled his operas to him.

I don't like the look of Steinfranzel either. Kornstock could hardly make him the hero of his opera to-day. Probably even now he possesses no shirt, but he no longer shouts for joy. His wife is weaving linen for an altar-cloth, when Luzian reads his first Mass. Franzel knows better. He knows we know nothing about the boy. For two years we have heard nothing. The abbot will have nothing to do with the deserter, and

there is nothing to be ascertained through the authorities.

We don't want to issue a warrant of arrest against him, and he does not seem to think the time has come to appear before me and prove to me that he has been worthy of all my care and kindness. His sister never says a word, and so we both worry on in silence.

A servant from Fock's farm who has never been home again since he was in the army, and has been careering round the world as a mason, is said to have written that he saw Steinfranzel's son at a workmen's meeting in Bruenn.

Well, then, he certainly is on the right road. If only I had never taken the boy from his home!

In the Spring.

My bishop is dead. Had he completely forgotten me, or had he such great confidence in me that in all these nine years he has never once held a visitation in St Mary's parish. He cannot have entirely forgotten me, for he is reported to have said once—"So Torwald has grown into a fine health resort. Well, that will suit Wolfgang Wieser, the great progressive." He does not know how lonely and deserted I am here, with my old-fashioned Christianity. He knows nothing of my fears. I see an old venerable world going down before my very eyes. I can do nothing to

prevent it, and yet it was all entrusted to my race. Will the Lord call me to account?

Now he is in the light eternal. He sees everything now. May he pray for me, the poorest priest in his diocese! There is no weaker vessel than mine, and no stormier sea than the one on which I sail.

30th April.

My petition for a transfer to another parish, that I sent in a year ago, has remained unanswered so far. But to-day an answer came, in the shape of a writing, from the Consistorial Council. No mention is made of my application, but they wish a popular mission to be held in St Mary's, in order, as they say, "to win back the people, who are falling a prey to the spirit of Freemasonry, to the Catholic Church." I wonder what the reverend gentlemen mean by Freemasonry. I don't think that is what is going on here. A mission! That means they will send Jesuits. But still I will do my best.

I have spoken to the manager of the place. He laughed at the idea of a Jesuit mission—"Well, Father, get it over by June at latest. We don't want any Jesuits here in the height of the season."

Beginning of June.

The sacred mission is over now. It has converted one man and killed another, and nothing certain can be said about the others yet.

I am the convert. Contrasted with the zeal of these reverend Fathers, I have realised how lukewarm I am, how weak and yielding.

With the one exception of the victim, and the Sermon on the Mount in the wood-cutter's hut, everything went on quite well. On the second Sunday before Easter they came, in their long brown coats, and they arrived by train, which caused some folks to say—"They want to drive out the Antichrist, and they come up with the dragon." But on the Sunday the first preacher made a good beginning with the gospel of the Good Shepherd, and more than half won over his listeners, of whom the greater number had come out of mere curiosity. The second preacher promised all who should be converted a complete indulgence that would take away all their sins by the merits of Jesus Christ. They soon grew to like that. Then day after day there were three sermons, and confessions and penitential exercises in church. The church was nearly always crowded, and the sermons that lasted an hour and a half, seemed still too short, for the preachers told all sorts of stories in their sermons. If the services are a means of amusement, it appears the congregation will grow, and a clever shepherd attracts his flock with the salt of wit. Only when the good old Dominican preached, the church remained half empty, which made him very sad.

He thought he was outside the pale of grace because the sheep would not come to his call, and sometimes he used to pray before the sermon in a corner of the church for illumination and the help of the Holy Ghost. But I think it was not so much grace as voice that the good Father needed, for the other two brothers had enviable voices and an indefinable way of speaking. If only I had learned to speak instead of to write! They described the seductive wiles of the devil, the awfulness of sin, the pangs of conscience in the hour of death, the eternal pains of hell in the most glowing colours and illustrated by numerous examples and parables. They said there was not a single house in the fair Torwald, "on which the Antichrist had not set his mark. And to these houses in the night there comes the pale angel of pride and gluttony and unchastity and unbelief, and leads the lost souls into the eternal abyss prepared by the wrath of God." Everything is worthless here below. Only one thing is needful : fasting and praying and penance that the soul may not perish in its sinful body, and that it may be saved alive for a better world.

Then I remarked pensively to my companion—"We see three lights burning, the light of faith, of work and of nature. Which will burn longest?"

The Father gazed around him as in a dream and

murmured—"Hell fire will burn the longest." Then he started as if he were suddenly awakening and asked—"Did you speak, Father?"

"These are troublous times," I said.

"As long as we have iron, we need not fear Russia," the Father chatted on in a political undertone. "Herr von Yark is said to be finding splendid ore here."

And as I remained perfectly silent, he continued—"With this ore we are superior to the English. Have you read that we are exporting twenty-five per cent. more iron-ore than England?"

And was this the same reverend Father who only an hour ago had thundered so wrathfully against the thirst of gain in modern times? I felt quite confused when I went to my room that night, and pondered over my own foolishness.

In the evening the little company is very cheerful, and at table they praise God by enjoying His gifts. But I have lost all my appetite on account of Christl. During the first sermons the old man's eyes flashed, when he saw how many faggots were sent to hell. He stayed in church from morning till night, fasted, prayed, listened, roamed along the walls to kiss and stroke the pictures of the saints. Every day he went to confession and communion ; and when he limped down the Kirchenriegel in the evening, he preached to the dogs and ejaculated sentences

that he had heard in the pulpit. He was quite confused about everything. In the second week, Father Chrysostom delivered a sermon on the subject of the Pharisee and the Publican. He denounced hypocrites and sham saints more than all the other sinners, calling them "false lights, devil's lights, who deceive others and who are more than all others God-forsaken."

In the evening, after this sermon, Christl did not go to confession. In the following night he did not go home to the room he has occupied in Jochrupp's house since he quarrelled with the sacristan. On the following day several people noticed that the old man was not in church and that the dogs were barking up in the wood ever since early morning. And then they found him. He had hung himself with his own braces. . . .

The Fathers disliked his being buried in the churchyard, but I gave my consent. In the Day of Judgment the Lord will know how to separate them.

Before they went away, I confided to the gentlemen my trouble about Karl Gross and Rolf. As Karl had never moved a muscle during the mission, they almost took his part. If he did not believe, they said, it was doubly creditable on his part that he performed his duties at the altar so conscientiously ; one cannot see into everyone's heart,

and must be content if a person obeys the commands of the Church. Rolf's was a different case, and Father Chrysostom offered to go up into the mountains to seek the lost sheep. I accompanied him.

Rolf was just at dinner when we entered the gloomy hut. He took out some forks, wiped them carefully with a cloth, and asked us to share his dumplings.

"We have not come to seek dumplings, but a poor soul," the Father began.

But the young man replied quickly — "I thought so, and I will tell you one thing, sir. Leave me my own poor soul, and you keep yours. Of course, I am a sinner, but so are you."

"I do not deny it, my worthy brother in Christ," answered the Father. "We always say it in our own sermons that we, the priests, are ourselves poor sinners."

"You say so, but you do not wish us to believe you. If you really thought so, you would not denounce others as you do. Do have some dumplings."

The Father remained wonderfully humble and said — "We only condemn what Christ condemned."

So the youth helped himself to a dumpling, and said, laughing, for he was carrying on the whole conversation very comfortably—"If Christ were

to enter the church during your mission, I should not like to be there. There would not be much brotherly love lost. First, He would drive you out, and then you would nail Him to the cross."

"That will do, Rolf," I interrupted. "You should listen to their sermons before you judge them."

"I have heard them," replied the wood-cutter, "I can repeat them word for word. I have known what they say for ever so long, and even if I do tell the Reverend Father, it won't do any good. We are all hardened—I in my old faith and they in their hardness of heart. It's much more sensible to eat dumplings."

So he quietly went on eating, and Father Chrysostom whispered to me—"I do not think there is anything more for us to do here."

Rolf heard it and rose. He looked at us shyly and said—"I hope I have not offended you; it was not my intention. I have only said what I think. Whoever does not care to hear it should leave me alone, and then I should be quiet and there would be no trouble."

Such was the sermon delivered to us by the man of the woods. On the way home the Father said to me—"That's not a sheep, that's a ram." A couple of wood-cutters had followed us, and they had heard the conversation. "You know him, Father, don't you?" said one of them con-

fidentially. "What he likes best of all is to lie naked on the Stoekel rock in the sun. But otherwise he is a good fellow."

"Yes, yes, I quite believe you," the Father replied, and then turning to me he added—"that's just the danger. If thieves and adulterers hold those opinions, the people know what to make of them, but so-called good fellows are always trusted. By the by, Father, you ought to know about the state of his morals."

When we came down into the valley, the people came running up and knelt down by the wayside so that the pious priest might lay his hands upon their heads. No one has ever left his potato-field to obtain my blessing, but of course I send it to their houses every day—only it does not seem to do much good, as they do not feel it.

We saw Herr von Yark's carriage in the road ; he stopped and got out to salute the missionary. He said he had just come from Pesth, and was sorry to have missed the mission. He commended himself to the prayers of the reverend Fathers, and drove on towards the factories.

After a fortnight's stay the Fathers have left to-day. I wished to have the bells rung, but they would not allow it. Mildly and humbly they bowed to all around. Some women wept, and some of the men laughed behind their backs.

A first-class carriage was reserved for them in the train, a courtesy which they owed to Herr von Yark and gladly accepted. A last greeting came to them from a hotel window. Someone called out to them with a loud voice—" *Per pedes apostolorum.*"

Regina suffered from the influenza during the winter, and she has not yet completely recovered. She was in church several times during the mission. She said she was most heartily sorry for the reverend gentlemen, because they had to shout so, and yet did no good. But if the people still remain hardened sinners in spite of all, one knows at least that it is not the pastor's fault. Ruprecht grumbles that they forgot all about the cattle. They ought to have preached about cruelty to animals, for if one observes how the horses are ill-treated when they are pulling heavy cart-loads of stones, one can see which is the shortest cut to hell.

Something is wrong, too, with Otilie. Yesterday she was standing at the door, brushing my hat, when she suddenly said, quite incidentally as it were—"Now I know why Luzian had to go off like that."

When I asked her what she meant, she gave no answer first, and then she began to sob.

I went up to her—"What is the matter with you, child?"

After a while she confessed that it was on account of her sins that Luzian had been cut off from grace.

"On account of your sins?" I asked. "I should like to know what great sins you have committed, child."

"Yes, very great sins, Father," she sobbed, and buried her face in the folds of my coat as if she were seeking protection. I thought something terrible had happened.

"Ottilie, surely you. . . ?" and my words stuck in my throat as I looked at her.

"No, not that, Father, not that," she smiled, with moist eyes.

"That is all right." The mission has excited her. It's always the way. The innocent are terrified and the guilty laugh.

Regina has left us.

Two hours before she died she gave Ottilie instructions as to how she was to carry on her duties. During the Communion she gazed earnestly at me, and asked me, "Pastor, how will it be for us two in the next world?" She did not again know me.

6th June.

This morning Kornstock handed me once more a handful of coppers to pay for his breakfast.

"No, old man," I replied, "I shall not take

anything for your breakfast, and yet I don't mean to give it you. You must play the organ after all."

As I was putting on my gown, he called cheerfully to me—"You priests are well off. You put on your cowl and then the whole man is covered up."

From which I gathered that he no longer looked upon his clothes as the best.

"Kornstock," I said, "there are several old cowls in my clothes-chest. If ever you meet a pedlar, tell him to come and fetch them."

"All right," he replied.

"Of course," I said, "it's a pity for a Jew to have a priest's clothes; but if a Christian won't wear them, what is one to do? If it were cut off at the knees, it would make the finest imaginable coat. But no one will wear it."

Kornstock paced the room a few times, then he came up to me and said—"I will play the organ again, Father." And after a pause he added—"I have made a plan: just listen. They must build a new organ up on the Dreispitz mountain. The smallest pipes must be as big as the trunks of the larches over at St Joseph's shrine, and the biggest like St Stephen's tower in Vienna. For the bellows, we shall want three hundred ox-hides, and the mountain blast will do the rest. Then I will play the organ, so that the whole Torwald valley shall tremble at the sound. Then they will have

to hear my compositions—they will be forced to!”

Ottilie is trying to replace Regina. Whenever she looks at me her large eyes ask whether I am not in want of something. Child, what should I be wanting? I like to sit up here when they are all asleep. I used to sit like this late at night in my parents' house. All my people used to be asleep, but I watched by the lamp. It is the same now. The little red light in the church is the only living thing in the quiet house of God.

Karl amuses me with his story. He says I talk to the hanging lamp and address it by the names of departed people. How much a tailor seems to know!

1st August 1887.

My first parishioners are dying or emigrating; and yet there are more people in the valley than ever before. At the two saw-mills there are sixteen men at work, thirty-eight at the paper-mills and twenty-one at the glassworks. There are also twenty-one diggers and trenchers, and at present a hundred and four miners. Ten men are at work in the new furnace, and about four hundred in the ironworks. There are ninety wood-workers and carriers, and twenty-six railway men. These data have been given me by Herr von Yark's son, so that I may know the number of my parishioners.

The last list contains scarcely a hundred visitors and guests. Tourists are not reckoned. One dare not ask what church they belong to, without grievously offending most of them, just as little as one dare ask whether they are married or not. But they all have a sneaking dislike for the priest. They look upon him as Herr von Yark's secret ally.

There is distress amongst the workmen. The few remaining peasants are unable to look after their own poor. The new poorhouse is very fine and grand—from the outside. So there is to be a large Charity Fête in the hall soon. It has been arranged by Herr von Yark. The visitors will find plenty of amusement in return for their alms. There is to be acting, music, dancing, and a menagerie. For a whole day folks are going to be charitable.

They are ramming long poles into the ground in the field. They are putting up masts for the climbers and flags and tents. They came to me, too, with their frockcoats and dove-grey gloves, and invited me to indulge in charitable amusement.

8th August.

I shudder when I think of that fête, and I am now going to describe it.

On the eve of the entertainment, nothing was talked of but Turkish music and new polkas, and

pole-climbing and spear-throwing, Russian bear-tamers, and Arabian fire-eaters—all for the poor. The young men are practising climbing, wrestling and jumping, and schoolmaster Sandor is said to have secretly rubbed his muscles with brandy.

Next day, to my great joy, I saw Rolf in church too. Then he came to the rectory and tried to be very polite. He said that they were in the sun now, up on his mountain. The great Dreibund forest had been felled to the very last tree, and the very last tree had been felled too. The hut will be pulled down, and my wild hare has lost its hole. Then he tried to find out whether I was going to the great fête, and whether I were going alone or with someone else. "With Ottilie," I said, and looked him full in the face. Then he said very gently that he would like to dance with Ottilie, if he would be allowed to do so. "Well, my boy," I thought to myself, "so you have ripened at last up there in the sun."

In the afternoon we all three went down together. First he walked in front of Ottilie and myself, and then behind us, and at last next to us. He was wearing new clothes and a scarlet silk tie. He even let the ends flutter. In his left trouser-pocket stuck the great leather case for knives and files, such as the wood-cutters in the Torwald always carry. I like that; it makes him look a man. Whenever he speaks to me, he is quite

sensible ; whenever he addresses a word to the girl, it is clumsy, and even stupid. But as far as I can see she is not offended, but trips along cheerfully by his side, still keeping all her anticipated pleasures to herself. A young girl going to her first dance !

The field was gaily decorated for the popular festival. There was a bright throng of merry folks. Just then there was a shriek of delight. A man was perched at the top of a pole ; he was loosening the gold-paper crown, tearing the little flags, ribbons, and wreaths, and letting them drop down among the people. Finally he tore off a shining object, swung it on high, hung it round his neck, and slowly descended the smooth pole. As the people kept calling him by name, we knew that it was the schoolmaster Sandor Uilaky who had fetched down the prize goblet from airy heights.

All I can say of the concert is that the young folks could scarcely await its end. There is no surer way of spoiling classical music than performing it just before a dance. As Mr Joseph was going to his seat, he stood still for a moment beside us and whispered to Ottilie, "A poor traveller begs for a quadrille presently." People were staring at the girl, and she blushed and trembled. And after a time she asked me in a whisper—"What does he want?"

While the hall was rapidly being transformed into a ballroom after the concert, I looked round for Rolf. He was standing by the door with his hands on his back, watching the commotion. He seemed rather ashamed of being alive at all, as the saying goes. I beckoned to him and he came and stood next to Ottilie. But though they were together they said nothing, so I tried to make them feel more at ease. "The dancing will begin soon," I said to her. "You look very nice to-day; you will have plenty of dancers. They will have to put their names down in time. I expect Rolf has got his down seven times, the rascal. Well, get ready, it's just going to begin." The young man turned his head very slightly towards the girl; they looked at each other in quite a friendly way, but then he looked straight in front again and never said a word. Then the music began to play, and the couples found each other and began to dance. Rolf was longing to dance, I think. He turned his head to one side and then turned it back again, blinked and stood as still as a tree-trunk in a forest. I went up to him, and pulled him by the coat-tail. Then he gradually put his arm round her neck, looked into her eyes, and said, "Shall we have a trial, little girl?"

At this moment the schoolmaster shot past. His cheeks were flaming, and his eyes sparkled with triumphant delight. "The prettiest girl belongs

to me," he cried, and seizing Ottilie round the waist, he whirled through the hall with her.

Rolf looked on, thunderstruck ; then he calmly leaned back against the wall. He kept his hands in his coat-pockets, clenched fists, I should say, if he has a drop of hot blood within him.

"Rolf!" shrieked the wood-cutter, "you must defend yourself." But he shook his head almost imperceptibly. Ottilie danced past him, and her look met his. It was a look of genuine contempt. "When a young man from the woods wishes to secure partners, he generally leaves his Christian forbearance at home ; but if he brings it with him, he will certainly not be knocked down." Suchlike comments were heard. Then Rolf went away. Not long after, Ottilie came to me and said she wanted to go home. Can it be that the triumphant lion from the mast has whirled her along too quickly?

That was yesterday. And what about to-day? In the morning a drummer paced the street and proclaimed that there would be trained monkeys, talking parrots, a singing dromedary and a dancing bear on show. The animals were bleating, roaring and shrieking in their cages near the large tent in the field, and a never-ceasing hurdy-gurdy moaned through it all. So they all went down, young and old, and I wanted to compensate my girl for yesterday. Nearly all the seats were taken,

but we found two in the last row right at the top. One had a good view of the round, closed-in, open space. Two half-naked riders on prancing horses performed all sorts of feats to the noisy amazement of the onlookers; then came clowns with monkeys, and cracked their ordinary jokes. I saw everything through Otilie's child eyes, and enjoyed it too.

After the players of the first part of the programme had retired, the excitement increased, for the bear was coming on. The cracking of a whip was heard behind the shed. Then a tall red-bearded man came out and led the artiste on a double rope. The she-bear was a shaggy, ungainly animal, that trotted clumsily along to the middle of the space. Her trainer retired a few steps, the hurdy-gurdy began to play shrill Russian dance music, the trainer cracked his whip and gave the word of command. Then the monster raised its body, crossed its heavy paws over its chest, as if it were bowing to a partner, bent its huge head slightly on one side and began to dance on its hind legs in the sand. There was great applause, but the she-bear took no notice of it, blinked up at the gaily-dressed people with its little eyes, just as coquettish actresses do. Then it almost closed its eyes in complete enjoyment, and continued turning clumsily and lazily round itself. At last the music stopped, and the dancer stood still and

upright, and when the clapping began it bowed, to the immense delight of the public.

Then came the great event. "Bravo, Uilaky!" someone called, for the schoolmaster had said he was going to dance a waltz with Mademoiselle Karschinkoff—that is the creature's name. At once they began to arrange matters with the tamer. "You may be quite sure this gentleman is a match for her." "There is no danger," said the tamer, "and the lady is a widow and is not a spoil-sport." "I am going to venture it." "Why ever not?" "It is doubtful." "It is absurd." "She could be led by a child." "There is almost too little credit for Mr Uilaky."

In the meantime the schoolmaster was already on the spot. The tamer gave the daring courtier instructions, but he also put a whip into his hand. Then he stroked the animal and softly retired behind the grating. The master threw away his coat and the whip, turned up his shirt-sleeves, probably in order to show his strong muscles, and planted his feet firmly in the ground. He was a fine athlete. The she-bear stood upright like a human being, looked at her partner and waited for his gallantry. Not a breath was heard in the whole place. The master took a step forward, bowed as if to a lady, curved his right arm and said—"May I have the pleasure of a dance, madam?"

"It is a crime, it is tempting Providence," I

called down. They hissed for me to be silent. The master laid his arm lovingly round the neck of the animal—he could scarcely encircle it—the she-bear lazily laid her paws round the body of the man, the hurdy-gurdy played a waltz, and the couple began to turn slowly. The animal hopped a little, gently raised the master from the ground, put him down again, raised him once again a little higher, and slowly lay down in the sand with him. It almost seemed as if it were a peaceable transaction. But one could hear him breathing deeply. The she-bear growled and laid her mighty head almost caressingly on the face of the groaning man; then the women began to shriek and the men called for the tamer. He appeared, but remained standing at the entrance, for the animal was beginning to growl loudly and flecks of foam hung on its muzzle. “Put a knife through its body,” screamed one of the onlookers, who were quivering with excitement. The bear-trainer lamented his lost capital and hurried away, perhaps to fetch a weapon, but he did not return. Several men made pretence of going to the rescue, but in each case they fell back. The master lay motionless like a doll in the embrace of the angry she-bear. “He has been throttled,” cried the crowd, and the planks creaked under their sudden exit. Suddenly a man sprang over the seats, and crossed the grating. The beast started up to meet him, growling

wildly, but he stuck his knife into its body. With a wild roar the animal sprang up and fell over sideways in the sand, while its brown blood smoked. The man picked up the master from the floor; he was no longer flushed, he was pale as death, but he raised his arms and his head. His legs trembled, but he did not break down, and, led by his rescuer, he staggered towards the exit and the open air. The knife stuck in the dying bear; the man had disappeared. They called him by name, but he did not come again.

“Did you recognise him?” I asked Otilie.

“It was Rolf,” she answered faintly.

That was the end of the fête. The people dispersed and everyone hoped to meet the heroic youth. To-day they speak differently of him than they did yesterday. The master is ill in bed with fever. Madam Karschinkoff is to be buried to-morrow. In the evening I said to my girl—“Would you have thought such a thing of Rolf?” She turned away almost angrily, as if she meant to say that she did not wish to hear anything about him.

Are girls really like that? Had he killed his rival instead of the bear, she would idolise him, but he allowed his partner to be carried off, and a woman never forgives that. Yes, they are like that, I suppose.

Late Autumn.

If these chronicles were read by the people—which God forbid!—they would think that I had nothing but freaks in my parish. I certainly have some, and they give me most trouble. Since Lady Day, Kornstock has disappeared again. I waited for him that evening, and poor Augustini had waited all day in his little beggar's cart, but he did not come to either of us, and he was not sitting beside the monument either. He had several times told me of his intention of going to Paris. That was the only right place for his musical creations, and from there they would wing their way over the whole world. The monument under the lime tree is cracking and bending, and yellow leaves are whirling about its base.

Lent, 1888.

During Mass to-day, it struck me that Karl showed a certain distraction and excitement, quite contrary to his ordinary behaviour. First of all, he lit Low Mass candles at High Mass; then his gaze wandered to the hanging lamp, to the windows, and to the few worshippers present. In the vestry, while he was taking off my alb, he said—"We have thieves in church—the oil in the hanging lamp disappears; I have noticed it for some weeks now. One filling generally lasts quite

five days, and now the lamp is empty every other day. Father, I am sure the oil is being stolen."

"I expect the hanging lamp leaks, Karl."

"No, one would be able to see that. Those scamps of workmen do it, only I don't know how they manage it, for I lock up each time with the greatest care. But now I am going to put up my work-table behind the altar, and while I do my tailoring, I am going to watch day and night—it's all the same to me. I must get hold of the rascal."

He is a model of zeal, and yet he has no faith. I am wronging him. My God, I am lacking in the gift of looking into men's hearts!—I am entirely lacking in it!

April.

The oil thief has been discovered. The tailor had received my commission to carry on his trade behind the altar for a few days, for he has no time to lose when he has work. Only the poor people order their things from him. Those who have money buy things ready-made. He suits me well enough. On the very first day he discovered the thief, when the people had hardly left the church.

It crept down through the hole for the bell-rope, then down the rope itself as far as the lamp, and then it began to drink. Karl, of course, came

out as quickly as he could, but he did not like to catch the poor church mouse, and he let it run away again under the dark roof.

But he stopped up the hole, so that the little creature, that has, after all, not been baptised, may not be able to get at the other means of grace. Hard-hearted Karl ! Little mouse, if you are very hungry, don't be afraid, but come and feed on the everlasting light.

Holy Cross Day.

Last night I had the following dream :—

The eternal God was on His judgment-seat, and the great ones of the earth were passing before Him.

The Judge said unto Moses—"What hast thou given unto thy people ?"

"I have given them the Law."

"And what have they made of it ?"

"Sin."

Then He questioned Charlemagne—"What hast thou given unto thy people ?"

"I have given them the altar."

"And what have they made of it ?"

"The stake."

Then He asked Napoleon—"What hast thou given unto thy people ?"

"I have given them glory."

"And what have they done with it ?"

"They have turned it into shame."

Thus He questioned many in turn, and each one complained that his gift had been dishonoured by the people.

At last the Eternal also questioned His Only Begotten Son—"My beloved Son, what hast Thou given unto men?"

"I have given them peace."

"And what have they done with it?"

Christ did not reply. He covered His face with His pierced hands and wept.

November.

Another ought to be writing the most recent history of St Mary's—I cannot. Is there indeed a Torwald left? "Even in these remote regions there is light at last," I heard some speaker say last summer at the opening of the new school. And it is true. The shady trees are gone, the slopes are bare, and the forests have been cleared. But then it has grown dark again too. The sun is hidden by the smoke of factory chimneys.

The company that turned the Torwald into a health-resort has smashed up. The hall is now a selling-place for glass and butter. One of the large hotels is now used as a coal-shed, and the other at Oberschuttbach is still partly in use.

All the good-humour has fled from the place. Formerly work used to make men happy and clever, but now it makes them stupid and dis-

contented. For they are scarcely obliged to think at their work, and they cannot spoil anything, or do anything especially well. They cannot put any personal effort into it, they can create nothing individual. The machine does everything, and they are its servants. The spirit of man has, as it were, passed into the machine, and its slaves grow mutinous ; and since personal creation is now placed beyond their reach, the desire for personal destruction awakens in them.

In the Torwald there are now almost nine hundred workmen, which implies nine hundred malcontents. They demand less work and more money. They realise the contrast between the misery that reigns in their own mostly large families and the luxury of their masters. A short time ago a miner said at a meeting—"It is not our poverty that arouses such indignation within us, but rather that our masters are rich, and, having grown rich through us, treat us like dogs. Then their conscience suddenly awakens, and they grow charitable with our money. We do not want alms : we want our due. We do not want to be better off, for our very poverty is our strongest ally in the fight. Poverty is afraid of nothing. Do you understand me, comrades?" That is what he said, and he was greeted with immense applause, as if he had proclaimed the salvation of the world. But what do they really

want? If one only knew what they wanted. I asked a tinker about it the other day, and he replied, laughing—"Well, you see, we join the shouting, but we don't know ourselves what we want."

"We do know, you fool!" interrupted Hies im Grund—"we want to share with the masters. Everyone of us has his ten fingers to seize and hold fast the same amount. We want to share. Yes, Father, that's what we want."

"I should be well content, my dear Hies."

Last autumn, when the great army contracts were made, all the iron-workers left their work at once, and said they would not do any more until they were given a twenty-five per cent. rise in wages. Herr von Yark forfeited vast sums on account of the delay, but he would not give way to the workmen until they themselves, hard pressed by their distress, offered their services again. Then he took them back, and he did not raise their wages, but, on the contrary, he lowered them. At the time I saw one man shaking his hammer in his sooty fist: "Wait till our time comes! We are the stronger."

Since then there has been grumbling in the valley. All kinds of sealed writings and mysterious boxes come in. I have had occasion to glance at one or two of the pamphlets. I should never have believed it, never. They acknowledge

no law whatever, papal, imperial or divine. They would destroy the past with its history and morals. Other people, other qualities, another nature. What once was virtue is weakness now, and the vices of former days are virtues now. So long the learned gentlemen have trifled with their theses and have propagated them. Now they see with terror that their own words have turned to blows.

Opposite the rectory they have made an opening, from which they are digging out a whole mountain of rubbish and red ore. My little garden-fence is already breaking down. They have bored their way through the Kirchenriegel to my house, and the engineers cast eager glances at my Ottilie. She is often restless. O God, if they were to ruin this child ! Lord of Hosts, send Thy holy angels, that they may protect us !

Spring, 1889.

I should enjoy the soup even more, if she were to laugh and sing again at her cooking. But she works and is silent. She works and looks after me with a mother's care, and wastes her youth in tending an old unhappy man. When I am resting on the wooden bench, she sits beside me and knits and sews, and sometimes she glances stealthily at me. We both are silent and understand each other without words. I am deeply sorry for her. Whenever I see some unfortunate weeping by the

wayside, I think, "Suppose she were to weep like that!" and I hurry back to the rectory to see whether she is all right. I always want to ask her a question, and I cannot make up my mind to it. She must not think it is her duty to stay in this sad house, if her heart bids her do otherwise. But she anticipated me after all.

When she was sitting next to me one day, she said she had one sorrow. She was no use, and did not do her duty by me, and that she was stupid and clumsy, and was afraid of being sent away any day.

"But, my child," I cried, "are you mad? Send you away?—But, child, be honest. Do you yourself wish to go?"

She begged me so gently to have patience with her, and I drew her head down to my breast. "You silly girl, why, I love you!" And we both could not help laughing, though our eyes were full of tears.

But St Joseph's shrine on the hill is always freshly decked with flowers since last winter. If not with flowers, then with a branch of pine. And now I know what pious soul does it. She has a sorrow in her heart, but she does not tell me of it. She tells St Joseph.

Our schoolmaster has applied for a second assistant. Madam Karschinkoff's embrace has

cost him dearer than he thought at first. Her tender caress has given him to understand to what extent he may rely on his athletic powers. He will never be able to cut another piece of bread for the rest of his life, and his left arm is paralysed. If a schoolmaster did not carry his wisdom in his head, he might be cowering beside the monument now, as Kornstock used to do. I like Sandor better, now he has realised that man has not only a body, but a soul as well. In his free time he studies books on teaching and sociology. He likes going about with the children, too, and he tells them about animals, plants and stones. The peasant children thoroughly enjoy it, but the workmen's children would prefer to rob the nests or to throw a stone at something that is alive.

One day he went up into the mountains to thank the man who saved his life, and to beg his pardon. Rolf tried to escape from him on to the Stoeckelstein, but the master went after him.

"I owe you my life, Rudolf."

"But are you really so fond of being alive, and down there too? Schoolmaster, if you want to know what life is, you ought to stay up in the mountains."

Rolf no longer lives amongst the wood-cutters, for they are all scattered. He is a shepherd now, and lives in a block hut on the mountain-slope.

"I certainly should not like to live all by myself as you do," said the master.

"Alone?" laughed Rolf. "Don't you see that I have everything?" And he looked around him as if to indicate the vast expanse of nature on every side.

The other day I was speaking about God, as being the just Judge. One boy, a miner's son he was, held up his hand and said he knew an answer too. "Out with it," I said. To which the boy replied—"My father says there is no such thing as God." And another workman's child added—"But there is a devil, and that's the employer."

There is an agent sitting in the public-house, and he is delighted with the progress. Twenty years ago, he says, the people of the Torwald had to produce themselves all that they required. What a miserable life it must have been, and how different things are now. All the countries in the world are the servants of the Torwald. Hungary provides the corn, India its rice, Arabia its coffee, Brazil its cotton, and Ohio its lamp oil. Herr von Yark's house, to mention only one, contains the produce of all the continents, such as Persian carpets, Californian gold, African ivory, and so on.

Yes and so on, one might count up for hours,

my dear agent, all the things that the fine wide world is sending in to us. And that is the reason of it all. That is why we are so happy.

"The world only shares its treasures with the masters," remarked Hies, anxiously, thinking of the share he had not got, "if only it would give us a share too."

"It will come in time, you may be sure," replied his comrade, the trencher.

For some time now I have been asked to start a Christian social union among the workmen here. I have thought of doing it myself, if I were only made of the right stuff. So I began with all possible zeal. The employers were very pleased with the idea, so one Sunday afternoon all the workmen were invited to a meeting in the hall. I was pleasantly surprised to see them come in large numbers, but they all sat down to beer. They cannot do without that. In my heart I asked the Holy Ghost to enlighten me, and then I began to speak about the Saviour. I said that Jesus was a social democrat too ; He was always on the side of the poor and humble, but not in order to give them riches and earthly power, but rather contentment and peace of soul. I could proceed no further, for they were already laughing at me. So cold and heartrending was their laughter, that all my words stuck in my throat. They took

their beer-mugs and blustered out at all the doors, laughing and making fun of what I had said. Only a few older men wanted to stay where they were, but the others said—"Just you come along too ; otherwise there will be a row," and they led them out.

So I was left alone with my Christian wisdom, which may be of some use for an old mountain priest, but is certainly no use to these fellows, who want to shatter the globe with their hammers and to share the fragments among themselves. As I was slinking home through the garden and feeling very sad, an old miner limped after me and said—"What misery there is, Father. It has done me good to hear a word of Christianity once again, but it is not allowed. One has to go with the others, or else they kill one. If we workers lead dogs' lives, it is because we make them for ourselves. The masters are not our tyrants, but the foremen are, and the party"—

I believe he wished to add more, but someone in the street was shouting for him, and he crept away from me with a frightened air to obey the summons.

I looked after him sadly—and yet I pretend to be one of the soldiers of the Church Militant !

I spoke to Mr Joseph about the conditions of labour here. He says the misfortune is that the

people are not thrifty. On Sunday there is superabundance, and during the week there is want. And the discontent is artificially produced by agitators.

"But not all the employers are of this opinion," was my hesitating reply. "I am afraid something will happen. And what has become of our beautiful, quiet industrious Torwald?"

"My father is tired of it all, and if he does not convert the whole concern into a company, he is going to hand it over to me."

"And you wish to take over ill-fortune?" I cried in terror. "Would you not rather give up the whole thing—to which no blessing, only curse and misery is attached—and move to a place where it is far more beautiful?"

"My dear Father," he said kindly, "I quite understand that you would rather have us out of the way, and the farther the better too. But I am going to stay here. And perhaps you will one day understand why."

[Here the following letter is inserted in the Priest's MS.]

"You must not take it to heart so, Wieser. What is happening in your parish is happening in many places to-day. How are we to prevent it? We do our prescribed duty, and as for the rest, God must do as He wills. You complain of your inactivity, my dear colleague. Do you then consider it your duty to destroy

the railway, pull down the hotels and factories? Do you wish to incite your people to rebel against a development that must be both natural and necessary, for the very reason that it is taking place at all? Even if we possessed such influence and power, we ought not to use it. If you perform your priestly duties, you will have done enough. No one will require more of you, least of all the bishop. Our superiors themselves know as well as anyone what the world is like to-day. In such times more is effected by diplomacy than by so-called holy zeal. And if the wealthy strangers, of which your parish is as full as I wish mine were, refuse to approach you, you must approach them. Praise their doings, make allowances for their weaknesses, and you will be a most popular priest, and will have more good influence on our cause than you think. Worldly wisdom is a virtue too, my good old friend, and for old friendship's sake I warn you not to grow discouraged.—Yours sincerely,

ANTON GAMSINGER,
Vicar of St Nicholas, I.B.

27th April 1889.

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Ascension Day.

I think it is quite an old one. I believe I saw it years ago. It often happens to stonework, and yet it stands for centuries after that.

After vespers to-day Karl took me by the hand and led me to the altar of St Joseph. He pointed to the wall on the right. I asked him what there was to be seen. Then he indicated a sharp black

line going from the window to the floor, quite a thin, fine crack.

"That's nothing," I cried ; "all walls are like that, in the rectory and everywhere."

"I only wanted to show you," said Karl.

Then I crept about in all the nooks and corners of the rectory, and I found cracks everywhere. I went to the New Inn, and they were there too, and they were large ones ; but the landlord said they had been there ever since he was a child. And these houses do not even stand on the Kirchenriegel.

I slept quite peacefully last night.

One Day Later.

To-day I looked at the crack in the church again. There are some near the font, too, and in the tower. There is dust in the cracks, and beetles have settled in them. The cracks are not of recent date ; there cannot be any danger. If I only knew what causes such cracks!

To-day I sat down in the shade behind the pine trees near St Joseph's shrine. I wanted to read my breviary there. I have long given up thinking and brooding about God and eternity. Peace only comes with prayer.

But this time it was by no means the case. As I was sitting there Ottilie crept quietly up with

some flowers. She stood on the prayer-desk and began to decorate St Joseph. At a little distance stood young Herr von Yark, and watched her at her delicate work. When she was going back he came out to meet her, and spoke to her words that I could not understand, but which must have been merry, for they made her laugh. I tried to hear as much as I could from my retreat.

"I envy my namesake," said the young gentleman. "If I were only as lucky as he is."

"But the saint is nailed on," said the rogue of a girl. "He cannot walk about and pick flowers."

"And you mean to say that I can walk about and pick flowers?"

"Yes, if you want to, it will be best"—

"'For you to pick them yourself.' Is that what you were going to add?"

She tried to run away, but he laid his hand on her hair, took her firmly by the hand, drew her to himself—quite close to him—and almost kissed her. She would have allowed it if I had not coughed.

He stood still, looked after her, and was taken aback when I appeared.

"Sir," said I, "I do not like that." I could not get anything else out. "The girl is still innocent."

"Yes, just for that very reason, Father," he

said very tenderly. But I was angry and gave him my opinion. He listened to me quite quietly. He had to listen for a considerable time, but when I had finished at last and wanted to go away he grasped me by the arm and said—"I quite understand your anger, Father. But if it really were as you assume, then your anger would be much too mild, and thunder, lightning and storms would come down upon me and break my poor heart that has such a deep longing for happiness."

For a while I did not understand what he meant. But he continued, and there was bitterness in his voice—"Do you really think I am a man like that? Oh, your reverence, I should have sins enough to confess if I were once to begin. But if ever I have seduced an innocent girl, you may invoke the curses of all the patriarchs and prophets upon me."

"But you kissed the girl!"

When I said this, his breast heaved and he said, softly and slowly—"I have kissed my future wife."

"Leave me," I cried. "Do not hold me so fast. I do not wish to see you again."

"On the day when your Saviour has blessed you, and you remember your parents in pious affection, I will come to you and will ask for the girl's hand in marriage."

“There can be no question of such a thing,” I cried, and hurried down towards the houses.

In my room I stood still as if nailed to the floor, and I said to myself—“So that’s the case, is it?”

After Mass on the following day, when the girl had set my breakfast and was just going out again, I said—“Stay here a moment, Otilie; I want to speak to you. You must go back to your parents in the Rauhgraben now.”

She did not reply and went out. I noticed afterwards that she was busy with her boxes and beginning to pack her things, and I felt bitterly grieved that she was going to leave me. Like a madman I rushed up to her. “And you can really make up your mind to it? You are going to leave on account of this wicked young man?”

She had a few garments in her hand, but she laid them over the back of a chair, stood straight in front of me, and said—“I suppose it is on Herr von Yark’s account that I have got to leave. I could kill myself for not having spoken at once, and for making you believe that there is a secret about it. I know it is not right. But if he is going to take me—if we get married”—

“Nonsense! That rich gentleman won’t marry you. That man of the world, that stranger! There can be no possible understanding between you. Imagine living with a man under those conditions. Are you quite infatuated already?”

She put her little blue apron up to her eyes and wept. I saw no way out of my sorrow.

"Child, child," I said, and stroked her cheek in my desire to dry her tears, "I would give everything, I would give my poor soul for your happiness. But I must tell you, even if everything else were all right, if there were no difference of station, of education, and no worldly prejudice, it would be all in vain. There would be no soul and no salvation. The law and the commandment of the Church forbid it."

Then she dropped her apron and said, to my surprise—"But, Father, you speak just as if we were blood-relations."

"It is more impossible," I cried—"much more impossible than if you were brother and sister. You must know that there can be no inter-marriage between a Christian and a Jew."

"But he is not a Jew," she laughed.

Then I clasped my hands and told her—"You see, Ottilie, there can be no question of such a marriage, and no one in the world can help you: I am almost tempted to say God cannot either. The Lord alone can enlighten your heart and teach you to give up the wrong man and obtain the right one. I will pray for you."

But as I spoke I felt how cheap words are; they do not relieve either the speaker or the

hearer. The girl went out slowly and closed the door softly behind her.

Afterwards she unpacked her things again, did her work as usual and said nothing. But the roses on her cheek faded that day.

I hear the smith's anvil all night long. But surely Simon Eschgartner is dead! Or has he returned? Do they all return?

Otilie says, too, that he is dead. I shall go down after Mass. The smithy is locked up. The lilac is growing on the chimney.

I will be strong. I have my work and I have my God. I must not be bewildered by sickly dreams. Do not thou faint, little light of intelligence. Depart not from me, O God the Holy Ghost!

June 1889.

A few days ago the workmen sent a deputation to their employer, to present their demands to him. But Herr von Yark did not admit this deputation, and departed for Pesth on the same day. They said he might as well go, since the fruit was ripe and would fall from the tree within a few days.

For some time the workmen have been talking about a "White Comrade," who is said to be coming to the Torwald. The so-called "White" is a workman-priest, says the manager of the

mines, for that is the name he gives to social democratic agitators. But why is he called a "White" and not a "Red?" They are all red. The workmen seem to think a good deal of him, and are making preparations for his reception.

Some time ago the parish council here received a communication from Vienna, inquiring after a certain Mathias Glockner, so-called Hies im Grund. Two days ago an important missive arrived for the latter, and I have been deputed to hand it over to him. So I sent for Hies, and told him to bring two witnesses. At first he refused, thinking it must be something to do with the Law. But finally he came to the rectory with two other workmen. Not without satisfaction did I see his threadbare coat. It is his best, and will, I hope, soon be his worst.

"Sit down," I said, "and you, Hies, must sit down in the comfortable chair, for you will soon be a distinguished person. I am to hand over to you an important letter. You deserve it. Can you read? Well, if you can't, I will make things clear to you. You need not be frightened. And this is its contents—

"To the very Reverend Pastor Wolfgang Wieser of St Mary's in the Torwald.

"DEAR SIR,—In the year 1880, seven young men were rescued from imminent and prolonged danger in

the so-called Laudamus Cave by the bravery of some peasants, and one of them, Mathias Glockner, commonly known as Hies im Grund, unfortunately lost his possessions on this occasion. One of the men who were saved has prospered in the meantime, and remembering the wonderful rescue, wishes to compensate the man for his loss as far as it lies in his power. He therefore requests your Reverence to hand over to Mathias Glockner the enclosed amount of three thousand florins, and to send the receipt for same to the firm of

‘AILLINGEN & Co.’

“‘VIENNA, 8th June.’”

Then I cast a glance at Hies.

“Who’s been having a joke with me, Father?” he cried.

“Do you remember the little fellow, Hies? I think it is from him. He was a clerk, I believe.”

Hies stared with amazement, and his face was as red as if he had had a shock. But when I laid the money—three brand-new notes—on the table in front of him, one after the other, his arms twitched, his hands shook, he jumped up and gasped for breath.

“Before you take possession of your fairy-tale fortune,” I said, “you must sign your name here, and the witnesses are asked to do the same.”

The two witnesses, a couple of rough fellows,

growled assent, and one of them said—"Well, this luck could not have come to a better man than Hies. He's a social democrat. He'll share with us."

"If it's mine, it's mine!" cried Hies, seizing the notes hastily and thrusting them into his pocket.

The other two were indignant and refused to sign, and tried to force the money from him. I had great difficulty to prevent them using force, and Hies fled through the back door.

From that day to this he has never shown himself at the ironworks. The workmen are trying to get hold of him to force him into brotherly love, for he was always the one to demand division of property from the capitalists. Now he is a capitalist himself.

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The manager sent a telegram to Pesth, urgently requesting the master's return. His son, too, is absent, and the officials are losing their heads. A bomb was thrown to-day into what used to be the hall, where tools, glass, and a large quantity of sawn pine-wood is kept. Some of the glass-ware was destroyed, and a hole has been made in the wall large enough to drive through it with a hay-cart. Some of the workmen have gone on strike and are collecting in a group. The military

police has not been called out yet. I thank God for that! The first shot will mean misfortune for us.

Herr von Yark was met at the station with his four-in-hand. He wished to display his dignity. He was met, however, with a surly reception from the workmen.

Herr von Yark was very angry with the manager for recalling him at such a critical moment. He drove to his house through a side street. A group of working women are said to have said amongst themselves—"If his guardian angel had done his duty, the master would have remained in Hungary."

It was in the year 1889 that the great frenzy came upon the people of the Torwald. They refused to do any more work, and stretched out their greedy hands for their neighbours' possessions. Law ceased to exist.

Future generations, who will read this record, will not believe it, and yet it did happen.

At that time the master invited me to spend an evening at his house. He also invited the other parish authorities, and although I was somewhat against it at first, I went after all, because I thought there was to be a discussion about the threatened disorders.

It was a rainy evening, and the wind was moaning in the trees. The smoke from the factory chimneys beat down up the rust-brown roads. I drove in the master's carriage, and young Mr Joseph greeted me at the door as if nothing had happened between us. He accompanied me up the carpeted stairs. Upstairs in his beautiful rooms the old gentleman received me very politely, and so cheerfully that I could hardly believe he had a bad conscience. The farmer from Zaunstiegel farm was there in his strange dress, half gentleman and half peasant. He has become chief carrier, and has to be addressed as Mr Achenberger. He finds it difficult to converse with me—I misunderstand things so, he says. The authorities are quite content with what the masters say. He considers that the country is very badly represented, and intends to stand for Parliament. While they were discussing the people's welfare, I was looking at the rooms. What splendour! There was the whole suite of rooms, with the most costly cabinets and statues. Tapestry hung everywhere around, the walls were wainscotted and covered with master-pictures of the animal and hunting world. There were golden candelabra and tastefully carved seats. The shutters were closed, so that the dark evening outside could not intrude upon our well-lit rooms. The table at which we

dined was covered with lights, flowers and silver. The gardener and the hunting-servant wore black tail-coats and white gloves. They waited on the guests in silence, and the gentlemen related amusing anecdotes. The old gentleman knew a good number of them, and to my astonishment he was very witty, and not a word was said of the workmen.

I suppose the dinner was excellent, but I do not understand much about it. I ate my piece of meat and drank my glass of wine and thought to myself: "Now I can go home." Suddenly one of the servers bent down to Mr Joseph and whispered something in his ear. He rose, went out, and was quickly followed by the old gentleman. The others and I stood and looked at each other, when we heard a dull thud outside. The young man returned—"Gentlemen," he said, "the workmen evidently intend to give us a torchlight procession." We opened one of the shutters, and red light streamed in. A crowd of dimly outlined figures was surging wildly up and down the front garden. There were countless torches, with their flames torn by the wind, while the rust-brown floods of smoke flew across the roofs.

The old man rushed in, he had quite a different look in his face now. "Put out the lights," he cried, "Franz, Anton! Lock the

doors—all the doors! The mob has come.” The hunting-servant said something about guns. The old man clenched his fists—“No, not that, Franz. Do not provoke them. Put out the lights.”

The lights were put out, but it did not grow dark. The panes and beams were crashed in fragments, the windows were broken, the red flare of the torches was reflected on the gilt walls of the room, and the smoke burst in upon their splendour. The old man knelt down in front of me, grasped my cassock, and entreated me to avert the danger: “Remonstrate with them out of God’s Word.” Then the young man went to the window, and shouted with all his might: “Workmen, what do you demand of us?”

An answer came from below: “We want the gate to be opened for us. We wish to give the master a suitable invitation. We workmen are keeping a great festival to-day, and we want our employers to be there too.”

Joseph turned to the old gentleman—“Do you hear, father. There’s nothing in it. They wish us to be present at the meeting.”

“Not for anything in the world, my son, not for anything,” moaned the old gentleman. “Hide me in the cellar, where the fire cannot come, hide me. Father, why don’t you speak. Don’t these beasts believe in God, then? They plunder and

murder innocent folk—good folk who have done so much for the place. Do go and talk to them, Father.”

Heavy footfalls were heard on the stairs. The gate had been burst open. Four or five men came in in their working-clothes. In one hand they held their hat, and in the other a revolver. One tall, red-bearded fellow advanced towards the arm-chair in which the master was cowering and said—“If we had been freely admitted we should not have been guilty of this breach of good manners. We are respectable men, and are ready to defend this fine house which we have built if you are kindly disposed towards us. We wish you to accompany us to the meeting, and there we will state our demands, and you shall not be insulted by a single word.” When he had said this, two men took hold of the old gentleman, one by the right and one by the left arm. But Joseph stood at the door with his weapon in his hand. “Workmen,” he said, with a hoarse voice, “you know what you owe to your class. Give me your word of honour that you will not hurt a hair of this old man’s head.”

“Our word of honour,” they all shouted. One of them caught sight of the ice-pail containing bottles of champagne. He seized several bottles and hid one away for himself. Then they led poor, trembling Herr von Yark out of his own

palace. The young gentleman and I followed them.

When we reached the door they hung an old cloak round their prisoner and put a hat on his head, and amid flaming torches and waving flags we were carried down towards the works in triumph. The procession was almost a solemn one, and it turned in the direction of the great ironworks where about three hundred smiths are ordinarily at work. A dull red blaze issued from the wide-open gate, all the forges were aflame, and in their light the mighty anvils and hammers, cylinders and machines, looked almost ghostlike. The uneven floor was black, black too the furnaces and walls, and black the high vaulted roof. But the iron tongs, axes, hammers and other tools gleamed bright red in the light of the forges. One seemed to be looking at everything, even the faces, through dull red glass. The people, men and women, sat down noisily on the furnaces, anvils and everywhere where there was room; others found seats high up among the beams, so that there was life and movement everywhere, although one could not see any distinct outlines at all. They brought in beer, bread, brandy and tobacco. It was rapidly disposed of; there was coarse laughter and shouting. A medley of Bohemian, Italian and German was spoken.

An arm-chair had been placed beside a large anvil for the master ; he was invited to take a seat, and they apologised for having no better hall for the meeting. Then the man with the champagne bottle came and put it under the arm-chair from the back. As the young gentleman and myself had come, two additional chairs were brought, on which we were obliged to sit down.

“ What is going to happen ? ” I thought, and it seemed as if an old workman had guessed my thought, for he said—“ Now the White Comrade will come and he will tell you gentlemen everything.” So I expected some wild giant with pitch-black hair and a face as pale as death. But he did not look like that. He was a clean-shaven, almost smart, young fellow, with a snow-white collar and a red tie. His grey coat was a little short in the sleeves. He had long legs, and anger glittered in his eyes as he rapidly came from behind a large fly-wheel, jumped on to the huge block and stood with the anvil in front of him as if it were a table. And who was he ? It was Luzian !

Luzian Stelzenbacher, the runaway theologian, now a social democratic agent. It was he.

At first I was dazed and wanted to go out, but I seemed rooted to the spot. He looked boldly out into the red gloomy building ; he did not see me. Two great labour parties are said to have quarrelled over him.

He made an abrupt movement to silence the storm of applause that greeted his appearance. He supported one elbow on the anvil, his other hand was in his pocket, and bending his head forward he began to speak. His voice was high-pitched and his delivery quick, and one could tell from his passionate earnestness that much of what he said came from his heart. But not everything. Much that he said was studied, and it came out anyhow without form or connection.

His speech may have been somewhat as follows—
 “Mankind is a society of poor devils. They are put on the rack like criminals in the Middle Ages. The desert, then civilisation, work and exhaustion succeed each other in turn, and the man who is in one place to-day will be in the opposite place to-morrow. Here misery is red, and somewhere else it is black. Comrades, our fathers were peasants, and our sons must be citizens. But a citizen becomes a capitalist, and the capitalist becomes a scoundrel. And our grandsons will be judged in the future as we to-day judge the man of means.”

“How extremely philosophical,” I thought ;
 “they will hiss him in a moment.” But he continued—“Are we enemies of society, because we are the enemies of the idle? We are the enemies of injustice. It is not our want of possessions that makes us poor : we require nothing but work and

food for body and soul. But their wealth, their unearned wealth, makes us poor. Their privileges, their wanton waste makes us angry, because it is obtained at our expense. Just as wealth makes the non-possessors poor, so it makes the propertied class bad. It makes us immoral and robs them of all fibre."

They began to shout applause. And as the old gentleman was sitting in his chair, a veritable object of pity, one sooty fellow seized the champagne-bottle, broke the neck with a hammer and offered it to the old gentleman so that he might refresh himself. But the young one saw the insult, snatched the bottle from the workman and threw it on the ground.

The speaker continued—"They are charitable, but with the means that we have created. To be charitable means to do good, not to give good. It is easy to give if one possesses. But we expect them to make personal sacrifice—to improve, beautify and ennoble the lives of the workers : that is our demand. The propertied classes are hard. And they deceive themselves. Their riches, that destroy their souls, are false riches—false, because they are not true, because they are often only a mere semblance. They are a semblance and they consist of paper money. It steals our productions, takes them out into all the world, drives hard bargains with them and thrusts the

wages and profits of our labour into the hands of the shareholders. They are false notes and nothing else."

He was interrupted by a great storm of applause. The tools clanked, even the great hammer moved as if to express its iron applause on the anvil. The old gentleman collapsed more and more, the young one grew more and more restless, and I was thinking to myself, "Now comes the Day of Judgment."

But with his indescribable boldness Luzian continued—"But give heed, comrades. These shares in their present substance are a mere phantom. As long as one believes in the devil, he continues to exist. When people have ceased to believe in paper value, it will cease to exist. It is only of value if it rewards the man who deserves to be rewarded. My Torwald comrades, you want higher wages and shorter hours. That won't do you any good. Free time costs money, more money than is covered by the increased wage. Demand something better, comrades. Become your own shareholders. Work for a percentage of the profit. Work for a moderate wage and a personal percentage. Let the employers have their own share of the profits in return for their mental activity, for the founding, management and risk incurred"—

He could add no more. Ringing voices rose,

saying it would be the same old story, a foolish idea—shares in the profits! As if the master of a factory would ever let the workmen look into his books! Confidence? Where?—when?—how? It would be just the same old story.

And Luzian continued—"Of course, it is the same old story, because there can be no wages and no profits without work. When they say everyone is to enjoy, I say everyone is to earn. I don't make fine words. I am only telling you which way salvation lies, comrades, and what will make you triumphant over your present masters, and that is—education, work and thrift."

"That is treason," he was interrupted. "And he gets paid for these empty phrases! It's a scandal!"

"Let him finish," some demand.

"Drive him off the anvil, the youngster!"

The ferment increased, and a small and very agile man sprang on to the furnace, surrounded by sparks from the glowing forge, and cried with a shrill voice right into the middle of the works: "Shares—Thrift! That's a paid scoundrel who dares to speak like that. So we are to suffer too, when the factories burn down and the palaces explode in the air. No, thanks; the shares we want are different. Comrades, forward to the master's house!"

And now the wild beast is let loose. There is

a whirl of excitement throughout the whole works. The people jump off their machines, beams and walls, the tools, wheels and hammers seem to live, an unheard-of shrieking and throbbing and shouting and whistling rages all round. A hundred arms and fists are raised against the "White Comrade," but Luzian has left the anvil. There are shouts for "Yark"—no longer "sir," or "master," or even "Mr." But fortunately the two gentlemen have disappeared, and Joseph seems to have succeeded in escaping with his father in the midst of the general turmoil. Some of the crowd cry that Yark had been promised personal safety on their word of honour. But others shout that he had broken his word too, and the women—they are always the wildest—shrieked in the midst of it all—"To the master's house! We got hold of him once to-day, we'll get hold of him again!" I was trodden under foot, and hid my head under a water-spout, while the wild chase raged over me and stormed out into the darkness.

How I reached the rectory I cannot say. Otilie was sound asleep, and I let her sleep on. They will hardly come to us. They cannot take anything from us, or give us anything either. If they take our temporal life, they give us the life eternal for which we are hoping. From my window I could hear the noise, but I should like to be an eye-witness of the further events of the

night. Then I remembered the little rectory tower. When Herr von Yark had it built, he hardly thought to what use it would one day be put. . . . From there I watched his house burn.

For that is what happened. It was past midnight. I had hoped that the worst would not happen. Suddenly the windows of the master's house were lit up, and the flames burst through the roof. The red gleam and the thick smoke, which had been in the ironworks before, now filled the whole valley. The gigantic sheaf of fire towered high and wild in the midst of the storm-laden darkness. Shots were heard. The village people stood in their houses with their ladders and their apparatus for quenching the fire. They were silent and almost rigid with fear. Every house-owner asked himself in terror, "Will they come to me too?"

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Early in the morning Otilie came into my room, remarking what a funny smell there was everywhere, and so much smoke in the air too! Then she noticed my untouched bed. "What is the matter? Have you not slept, Father? And how ill you look! Jesus, Mary! why you are bleeding! For God's sake, tell me what has happened, Father?"

I never thought that I showed so many traces of the previous night. I looked out of the

window, and saw someone standing in front of the house. "He has been standing there for ever so long," said the girl; "he won't come in, and he won't go away."

"You go into your kitchen, Ottilie, and Ruprecht is to stay at home to-day, and not let the cow out of the shed. I shall not say Mass until later." Then I went down to the man who was standing at the gate.

"Tell me, Luzian, has anyone been hurt? Where are the von Yarks?"

"They have left," he replied. "In the night I succeeded in taking the two gentlemen to the station at Unterschuttbach in a coal-cart. In front of their house the workmen came to blows. Some wanted to guard it and others wanted to storm it. First the women got in and rushed about all the rooms and plundered the chests and carried off the silver. When the police arrived the house was already in flames. Two blacksmiths have been wounded, and one glass-worker is said to have been killed."

A servant of the landlord at the New Inn, who was passing, called out—"They are at work again. The chimneys are smoking just as they do every day. The miners have just gone in."

Is it possible? Can the crowd have a fit of madness too, and know nothing of it the next day? . . .

I looked Luzian straight in the face and said—
“What a night that was.”

He took a step towards me, but he did not look up. He studied his finger-nails and said softly—“What must you think of me, Father?”

“Luzian, come upstairs into my room. Come.”

He followed me hesitatingly. In my room he remained standing in front of me, and I sat down.

“I heard your speech yesterday, Luzian.”

“Then you saw how I tried to turn the minds of the excited workmen in another direction.”

“And you see the results. Luzian, Luzian, what have you done? Why did you run away from us?—and to go among this rabble! A man who wants to get on with these people must be made of somewhat different stuff from you, you foolish lad. Come, give me your hand. It is a good thing that you have come at last.”

He fell on my neck and began to sob.

“Don’t do that, child. There is some water, so that you can wash, and then I will call in Ottilie.”

But Ottilie gave her brother a sound lecture. She is quite a character. I did not know that till to-day. After the first passionate caress, she pushed him away with both her hands: “I shall never love you again all my life. A hundred

years of purgatory can't burn the disgrace out of your soul that you have put upon us." Luzian tried to defend himself by saying that he had wished to take up the cause of the oppressed, and he mentioned the word, "love of one's neighbour." But she cut him short. "I should like to know where you begin loving your neighbour. Is it with utter strangers, or with your father and mother? It seems to me, Luzian, that you have no idea how wicked you are. If you don't want to be a priest, it cannot be helped—most people are not worthy of that. But fancy going about the world like a vagabond! And not a word from you for five years! Luzian, our father is not in the best of spirits, and our mother is ill, and if you went out to the Rauhgraben on your knees, you would not be able to make up to them for what you have done."

He stood there like a poor sinner. I made him have a hot meal, and while they were both sitting beside me, I could not help thinking: "Thank God, that he has come home!"

The frenzy is not yet over, not by any means. In the morning an old workman brought the news that a body of men were searching for Luzian Stelzenbacher, calling him traitor, and demanding old Yark at his hands.

He put on Ruprecht's Sunday clothes and fled into the forest—over the Griessalm to the Rauh-

graben. The girl said it, and so we had to let Luzian go. Half an hour later, eight or ten men came, and they were fiercer than yesterday. One pointed his knife at my breast and said—"Priest, you know where he is," and another swung a rope saying—"This is a decoration for the White Comrade." Ruprecht had hidden Otilie under the straw in the barn. The barbarians tore the picture of the Saviour from the wall before my very eyes, held it in front of me, and asked me whether I did not know that Christ had been on the side of the poor, and yet I had my paunch filled by the capitalists. They said this was the first time they had come to the rectory, but it would not be the last. And with this threat they departed.

This happened on the 23rd and 24th July 1889.

There was snow on Ascension Day, and it happened that Steinfranzel's wife, who was shovelling it away from the door to the goat-shed, suddenly fainted. Franzel and his sons were already on the way to church, when he found out that he had no rosary in his pocket. He went back to fetch one and saw the woman lying in front of the house. Since then she has been in bed; she cannot move her right arm or leg, and cannot speak distinctly. Sometimes she speaks

dreamily of Luzian, saying that he has been in Rome with the Pope for ever so long now. And if ever Ottilie were to marry, or Friedl or Steff, Luzian would be sure to come back and marry them. She cheerfully talks about her ideas for hour after hour. I have visited her twice, and have given her the sacraments. She is full of submission to the will of God, and she only asked me to write to Luzian when she was dead, so that he might say a Mass for her poor soul.

When Luzian was obliged to escape, he really reached the Rauhgraben in safety. Ottilie went up afterwards, accompanied by Ruprecht, to prepare the sick woman. Old Franzel said nothing when his son came home except—"Just rest a bit, Luzian."

His mother saw him and said to Ottilie—"There is a wood-cutter over there. He is sure to be hungry. Give him a bowl of milk from the speckled goat."

Ottilie said to the sick woman—"Mother, that man knows Luzian."

"Really?" she replied with closed eyes. "Will he be coming soon?"

"Yes, he will come soon—this week. Perhaps he may even come to-morrow, and if the storm has not broken down the bridges, he may come to-day."

"You must make him up a comfortable bed

near the warm fireplace," murmured his mother. After a while she opened her eyes and looked sharply at the boy, held out her hand and said quite quietly :—"Welcome, Luzian."

Franzel held her by the hand for a while to feel her pulse, and then he whispered to us—"It's beating the death march."

Then Luzian went out, and is said to have cried aloud in his anguish.

The sick woman did not say much more after that time. She slept, and Luzian sat beside her bed. Towards evening she raised herself and asked for her Sunday dress and her new shoes. She said she must go to church, the bells were ringing already. She wanted to go to Luzian's first Mass. A quarter of an hour later all was over.

We buried her to-day. Young girls wearing wreaths carried the coffin out from the Rauhgraben. They were all in white, and the wreaths and flowers were white. I could not help thinking that for the cheery Steinfranzel folk, even death comes with flowers like the month of May.

They decorated the altar of the church with roses too. Like a procession on Corpus Christi Day, they came up the hill with the coffin, made of white pine boards, and the bells could not have rung more solemnly had Luzian really been about

to say his first Mass. These mountain-folk are full of devotion, and after thy blessed death and thy joyful life, it is almost like Ascensiontide, thou saintly woman !

Franzel with his snow-white hair did not shout for joy, but he did not complain either ; sadly but calmly he looked down into the grave. Ottilie, too, was brave. Do we not know that we shall meet again ? But poor Luzian !

Regardless of the danger on account of the workmen, he followed his mother down from the mountain. I realised by his frenzied grief how his faith must have suffered during his earthly pilgrimage.

As I was saying a prayer for the departed, and sprinkling the coffin with holy water, I saw something horrible. The coffin moved by itself and sank down deep into the sod, while the walls of the grave slowly collapsed and the coffin entirely disappeared beneath them. Holy God ! what has happened !

In the afternoon we all went up together to the Rauhgraben, and Ottilie and Luzian accompanied their father. I had to go with them and talk to them quietly, so that the old man might not feel his loss too acutely just at first.

In order to make us all forget our sorrow, I urged Luzian to tell us his adventures. He is just

the same warmhearted boy, and I was always sure that a great deal would be forgiven him. He said that during his last few years at the monastery his teachers had not been exactly satisfied with him. And one day, when he was out for a walk to St Johann, he met some strangers, and they told him so much of the wide world, that he began to feel quite restless. One of them spoke of the horrible injustice that creates the poor and the rich, and said there would be a world-fire to cleanse mankind, and that every Christian ought to join in helping to free the oppressed. There he heard expressed, what he had often thought in his own heart, for Luzian had confided to me long ago : "A priest to-day has more to do than to pray and to say Mass : he ought to preach, and not only in church, for the worst people never come to church at all, but in the public-houses and in the streets and factories." Then he read books from the library, which drew his attention to such matters. And when the principal examination was no great success, and there was no real guarantee as to who was going to pay for his future studies, he made up his mind and went off. After a short visit to the Rauhgraben he went abroad. As a mendicant student he crossed the Alps into Switzerland, went along the Rhine through Germany into Bohemia where he was for some time traveller to a cloth firm in Reichenberg. There,

too, he delivered his first speech to the workmen. Then he was in a chemical factory in Bruenn. There he earned and saved money, and wanted to send it to his parents, but he put off writing until he had good news. Then he told us quite openly about a young woman. After a violent speech that he had delivered at a meeting, she addressed him: "Stelzenbacher, I like you. Will you stay with me?" Then they went about together for a while, and whenever he met with great success as a speaker, she always used to say: "Yes, my man he'll be a champion when the time comes." All at once they heard that there was good work to be had in Vienna, and they planned to go there. On the day of their departure he went to her lodgings to fetch her, and he did a foolish thing. He found a wild bearded fellow there, who seized him by the throat and said he could murder him, if he wanted to. But he was going to be kind and let him live, but he must pay the penalty of having visited his wife and leave all his money. He was quite glad to get out of the difficulty so easily. Then he did his year of service in the army. After that he could not find any work, so he accepted the offer of a labour party to travel about as a social democratic agitator. To keep body and soul together, he went about in the manufacturing districts and spoke just as he felt. When he thought it over on his bed at night, his conscience

grew restless. But whenever he spoke reasonably and moderately, they threatened to stop his pay. If he spoke passionately and vehemently he was arrested by the police—a thing that happened to him more than once. But his periods of imprisonment always raised him in the estimation of the workmen. They called him the “White Comrade,” because he never got into debt on principle, and always wore white underlinen. He was also asked to speak in the Torwald. At first he did not like the idea of appearing in his home as a wandering preacher, but then he learned that the workmen in this district were taking up a very dangerous attitude, and he thought that he might perhaps have a soothing influence. He meant to preach reason, and not as they always liked best—force. Then the folks at home, and especially the pastor, would see what he was really like. He did not feel quite sure of himself, but he was of good courage, and thought it only required a bold front to face the new and frenzied spirit that had entered the Torwald. “But now,” Luzian concluded his account, “now everything has happened differently. Instead of my teaching the working men in the Torwald, they have converted me. As soon as I saw the old place that I love so well, and thought of the old days, I noticed the difference between the sound contentment that reigned then and the efforts of the social

democrats. On my native soil I found courage, as it were, to speak as my conscience bade me, and now at last I see things clearly. During my speech in the ironworks, I was half on their side, but now I know better. Now I know that there is nothing to be done with the people. I shall give them up. I have made a mistake. I shall return to my ideal vocation—the priesthood.”

Franzel took him by the hand and said—“Luzian, my boy, if only your mother were still alive.”

Some time afterwards I sat down with the “White Comrade” under the larch tree, and spoke to him as follows :—“I am quite ready to believe that you have made a mistake ; it seems so to me also. But if you believe that you will realise your ideal by becoming a priest, you will be making another. No man in the world is doomed to such bitter disappointments as a secular priest who has ideals. You may believe me, my son. Years ago, when your letter came saying that you had given up the idea of the priesthood, I was—I think I may tell you now—indignant. I cannot tell you how your letter pained me. But that is over now. To-day you wish to return to the priesthood, and I warn you against doing so. Do not. Luzian, look at me. With what confidence did I not come to St Mary’s, fully convinced that I should lead my parishioners through a peaceful life on

earth to eternal blessedness. And now I am a shepherd whose flock have been attacked by wolves overnight. . . .”

As I was unable to continue, we sat together in silence, and I do not know which was the sadder of the two. At last I added—“And what is happening to me is happening to others of my colleagues to-day. Of course many of them do not see it. They perform their official duties, play cards and skittles, and live comfortably on in the face of atheism and the ruin of the people. No, Luzian, you must not be one of those. And whoever takes it seriously has a lifetime of suffering in front of him, second to none in all this world of pain. For I tell you, young man, even if all sinners find grace in the Day of Judgment, we priests shall find none. Souls have been given into our charge, and we have lost them. To us has the light been given, and we have been fools.”

“Father,” cried Luzian, “do not speak like that, I cannot bear it. It does not apply to you.”

I put my hand on his shoulder and said—“I know one more path. The light is there. Listen to me. Up in the mountains lives a man who is only a few years older than yourself. It is the son of the deceased Simon Eschgartner. He used to be a wood-cutter, now he is a shepherd on the Griesalm. In our valley the sun is not bright enough for him. His name is Rolf. Let

him talk to you, and if you one day are at a loss to say what Christianity really is, then go up to him."

"Father," said Luzian, "where could I find a better Christian than you, who have been the greatest benefactor to myself and my family. Now I am here, and do not know what to do, and ask you, from all my heart, to give me your advice."

"I can give you no further advice. Go up to Rolf."

To-day a stranger addressed me, and asked me if I were not Pastor Kneipp. He mistook me for the Suabian nature doctor, whom he had seen some years ago, and who is said to be doing a great deal of good. I told him, "You are mistaken. I am Wolfgang Wieser, and what is the use of resembling a capable man if one is not."

August.

Serious news has come from Pesth. It is the announcement of old Herr von Yark's death. The horror and fear of that night in July have caused it.

A packet of newspapers and some money have been sent to me. The papers say what a great and noble man he was. Countless good deeds are told of him, and the greatest is that this

wonderful man has brought a mountain wilderness into cultivation, where a few decades ago wild animals and half-wild people dwelt. But to-day it is a modern health resort much frequented by visitors, and a centre of industry for the good of the inhabitants. In one of the papers it is most touchingly described how he unceasingly endeavoured to do good in the face of much opposition, and how he had fallen a premature victim to his exhausting activity.

The money is to pay for Masses for his soul, and I am desired to recall his memory from time to time, so that the Torwald may learn how much it owes to the departed. I will say those Masses, and will say the prayers for the departed in the sense in which our Saviour commanded it.

I was going to give the money to poor workmen, but have not been very fortunate in so doing. I gave some to a wretched, half-sick miner, so that he might get something to eat. "I am not hungry," he said, "but thirsty, and that's a very small contribution for a thirsty man—a very small one indeed."

I wanted to give some to a workman's wife with three little children. But she screamed at me—"Seven florins from a millionaire! it's absurd." But she did not intend to be made fun of, so she tore the money out of my hand and thrust it into her deep pocket.

The workman Grulin is badly off. In that night in July he was shot in the arm, and still lies on the straw. His housekeeper has run away, and has left him with four children. I offered him a little money too, and asked him to entrust two of his children to me, so that I might find good people who would take care of them. "My dear priest," he said, laughing, "you won't bait me like that. My children are being brought up as social democrats. You can give me the money though, thanks. And now you had better go to your peasants."

The manager of the mining company here has received news from young Herr von Yark which will bring about a great change throughout the whole Torwald. All workmen who do not belong to the place are to be dismissed at once. The small ironworks and the mine only are to be worked in the future.

The mine too. If he would only come back. I would entreat him on my bended knees. But he will not often return to the Torwald, and it is just as well.

If Ottilie would but speak, so that one might at least scold her. She still thinks of him. And as she believes that she must conceal her secret from me, she will gradually grow to hate me. And yet she knows as well as I do that it cannot be. Love is a heavy cross.

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Mathias Spatzel, called Hoisel, does not belong to this place. Why does he not go? The other people who have been dismissed have already departed, but Hoisel still roams about the valley. He appears to be following the girl again. Many bad characters have been at St Mary's, but I have never felt so suspicious about anyone before.

He is reported to have said that his rival, the shepherd Rolf, would be sprouting out of the ground this time next year.

A poor woman was standing beside the bridge. As I passed I gave her my hand: "God be with you, mother, I shall see you again to-morrow." And it is not true. To-morrow I am going to the capital to be made Canon of the Cathedral. And now I have no time to lead the old woman over the bridge, for I am going up into the church to pray. Trembling and groping she stands on the swaying plank. Beneath her the water rolls heavily on. But I go on to worship my Creator at the altar. When I look round again the old woman has vanished. . . .

A man who can dream thus is outside the pale of God's grace.

I have never been ill in all my life, but I do not know what has happened to me now. Sometimes I feel as if I were being suffocated, and as if

my lungs were going to burst. My chest is bound as if by iron hoops, the sweat comes out at every pore, my limbs tremble and almost give way beneath me. And then it all passes over.

How good it would be to go home with the feeling of having done one's earthly duty.

They are hammering day and night at the smithy, and yet no one seems to hear it. Simon told me so. The scythes will soon be ready. The men are coming. They are coming from all sides.

1st September.

To-day young Herr von Yark suddenly stood in front of me in the rectory after service. He wore black clothes and black gloves. At first I thought it was a farewell visit, but it is the very reverse. He is now master of the Torwald estates, and wishes to stay for good. He is going to have his father's house built up again. He speaks of it as if it were a matter of no importance. He speaks about the workmen also, but with incredible nonchalance, as if they were a soulless element, and not his bitter enemies. I should never have believed him capable of so much candour and self-control. Then he spoke of his father, but without any allusion to that July night. Then he rose from his seat and said he wished to apologise to me. A very tactless mistake had been made, but

quite without his knowledge. He said I was to forget all about the newspapers and the obituary notices. He would try to make up for it as much as possible.

When he was going to leave, he seemed unable to make up his mind to it, for he stood still and did not go. His hand was already on the door-handle when he drew it back, and stroking his little beard with a trembling hand, asked me a favour. He asked me for something very great in fact. He wanted me to baptise him.

“Go to St John in the desert.”

But he was dead in earnest. He said he had always refused, in spite of the advantages he might have gained thereby; but to gain this prize. . . .

“Certainly, certainly, sir,” I said. “Heaven is a prize for which we cannot pay too dearly. But would you not rather receive the sacrament in Alpenzell? The abbot would not like to forfeit such an honour.”

“Father,” he replied, “we two have never been fond of empty and polite phrases. I want to be a parishioner of St Mary’s, and you must baptise me. I ask you to do so. I beg you from all my heart.”

8th September.

The schoolmaster, Sandor Uilaky, stood sponsor at the baptism. The parish has received a bap-

tismal gift in the shape of the building that was once the centre of the health resort, together with much land and funds for the endowment of an agricultural school to be erected on the premises. Many people were present, and there was great rejoicing.

It was thus I baptised him in our venerable parish church, on the feast of the birth of St Mary, at six o'clock in the evening. There was an earthquake that made all the windows clatter, and the panes cracked. Mortar fell from the walls. The hanging lamp with the everlasting light swayed to and fro for a long time, and could not come to rest.

We went down through the forest, Joseph and I, walking arm in arm, for we are now brothers. Suddenly someone shouted out from behind a pine-tree—"You may wash yourself as much as you like, you will still remain what you were before." Then a shot was fired and Joseph started slightly.

The culprit was captured on the spot.

Joseph was laid up at the New Inn for four days. On the fifth day he came to me, but his right arm was still bandaged. He was cheerful, and yet so solemn that he frightened me.

"Now, my dear Father," he said, "my right hand that has bled is going to woo my bride. Now I am poor, for my house is burnt down ;

now I am sick, for my arm has been shot through ; now I hold the same faith as you and my Otilie."

"So you have been baptised on account of a woman. Woe unto you, for you are not a true Christian."

"Does not the Word of God say, ' Whosoever is baptised ' ? "

" Whosoever is baptised and believes."

" But can faith not be replaced by love ? "

" Possibly by love of one's neighbour, but never by love of woman."

Then he grew angry, and said he had done everything that the law and the Church demanded and that lay in his power, and that no one had any right to separate two people who wished to be joined together ; and surely if the father and the brothers and sisters agreed ?—

" And do they agree ? "

" Old Franzel has laid his hand on my head ; and still you will not give your consent, Father. It is no longer a question of a hard decree but of a hard heart."

As he said this very passionately I replied—
" If you are a Christian, show it in your actions. Be meek."

I left him standing there and went into the next room and almost bit my lips through in my grief at having to lose Otilie. This young,

faithful, innocent being, the one joy that still remains to me.

If you wish to be a Catholic Christian, you foolish priest, carry your heart up to Mary, the spotless Virgin and Mother of God.

The workmen are gathering again. Their headquarters are at the public-house at St Johann, and they are in communication with large masses of their fellows.

To-day I had a most exalted visitor. It was my dead bishop. He stood before me, robed in purple, and a gold chain was about his neck.

"How can it be?" I asked him. "Your lordship is already dead."

"That is the very reason, my dear Wolfgang," he replied. "During my life I unfortunately neglected to come up." . . .

Then a policeman came and asked his lordship to drive in.

Said the bishop to me—"I can do that. I have a wife and a child." . . .

And he drove into the mines.

Now I have got it. It gnawed at the cord, and tried to bite it through. Then Karl set a trap for it and it went in. Now it is cowering in its cage and looking at me inquisitively with its

little eyes, wondering what I am going to do with it. What am I to do with you? I will tell you how wrong you have been! Are you really thirsting after the holy oil? It would be very nice, but I do not believe you. You don't want food for your soul. You want to cram that tiny maw of yours. Bacon is good for that. You may have as much bacon as you want, but you must leave our little light alone.

What? You want to make the people of the Torwald happy? You foolish mouse.

I don't believe it. They say that Hoisel the wood-cutter did it, and they also say that young Herr von Yark shook hands with him. Christ our Saviour bade us do so, it is true, but can one believe it? Can one believe it to-day, when it is looked upon as the greatest virtue to destroy one's enemy.

O God, if love would but come to men before I die, how happy I should be!

Joseph went to the cell to see the culprit. He asked him—"Man, what have I done to you, to make you shoot at me?"

Hoisel began to protest that he did not know why himself; he was mad, the pastor's girl had made him mad, for she always ran away from him and after the fine gentlemen, and he quivered so

in his anger that the shot was fired before he knew it.

Joseph said—"So it was a matter of jealousy. I understand. You trembled in your anger, and the gun went off, and now they are going to try you. No, my friend, they shall not do that. You cannot help love. The sins that a man commits out of love shall not be reckoned unto him. See, my arm has already sufficiently recovered that I am able to shake hands with you. If you wish to emigrate, I will give you the means of doing so, for you will not wish to remain in this district."

In answer to this kindness, the other replied—"If you are afraid of me, you can go. I am going to stay."

"Do as you like," said Joseph, and on that day Mathias Spatzel was set free.

He could not be absolved in confession, and now he has been absolved without confession, and by a Jew.

I went to him and said—"Joseph, you know that baptism alone was not enough for me. But things have changed. I have seen that you are really a Christian, for you have learned to forgive. In the name of God, take her to be your wife."

That was on St Matthew's day, 1889.

There is something the matter with it. It

sometimes grips the grating with its little front paws, and looks out through the bars. It squeaks, and I understand what it means. "I have been to church so regularly," it says, "and now they want to put me in prison. Do take care of me, Father. Remonstrate with them out of the Bible."

What do I hear?

I am quite alone in the old house and afraid of the mice.

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In Hohenmauth there was once an old chaplain, of whom it was told that he was no longer able to elevate the Host at Mass. He always began the prayer, he always bent his knees, and tried to raise his arms, but he could not do it. His limbs trembled and the sweat stood on his brow, and finally he was able to lift the weight of the sacred bread amid groans and sighs. People say that there was some grievous sin on his conscience.

At Mass yesterday something similar happened to me. As I was holding the Holiest of Holies in order to elevate It, as the Lord was elevated with His cross, I heard Simon hammering again, and my arms were powerless. I knelt down, I prayed, I tried again, and I did not know where I was. Karl led me out into the vestry, and a shudder ran through my whole body.

Almighty God, have mercy upon me!

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I cannot read Mass any more, the walls are cracking. The poor little mouse has been caught, but he allows the blackbirds to fly about in the church. They fly in through the chinks, and put out the light. Love will never come, and there will be a great darkness upon earth.

Dominus vobiscum !

I was sitting up at St Joseph's shrine and listening to what they were doing inside the mountain. There was hammering and rolling and thundering ; hollow, hollow, the earth is quaking.

Suddenly Hoisel sprang out of the bushes and staggered towards me. He shouted to me—"Why did you give the girl to the Jew? You are no priest ; you are Judas Iscariot—Compared with you I am a saint—though I murdered the old woman and the others up on the Alm, and the young gentleman."

A child's voice called from behind a tree—"You have sold innocent blood to the Jew." Then many voices cried from above and bellowed—"You have given away the Christian girl. You pretend to be a priest, and yet you give the souls entrusted to you to the Jews—souls, and bodies too. Do you hear the roaring inside the earth? They are all together inside waiting for you. You and your Church will go into everlasting hell."

They were close upon me. I ran round as one pursued, but they were still upon me. Simon, have you finished? Hosts with banners and scythes, so numerous that no man can count them. And they are going to judge us all. . . . And you, girl, are binding your wreath of orange-blossom, and are so happy. No wonder, if to-morrow is your wedding-day.

Kornstock, immortal artist! we two are left—you with your *Happy Man's Shirt*, and I with my *Heart-throbs and Hammer-strokes*. Kimpel the blacksmith must blow the bagpipes. Three fellows started out for the fair. Hurrah!

My father was a gardener. I should like to ask him whether they ever turned him out into the garden.

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Last Judgment Day.

Appeal to my bishop.

I ask you, God and all saints, to help me in my misery. You have left me alone, and there is terror reigning in the Torwald, such as has never been before.

They have pursued me with fire and curse, and with the interdict. They say I am a traitor. Do you judge my cause. I fled into the church, but they knocked at the gate with hammers; I climbed up into the tower where the bells are, that

may no longer ring. I looked through the windows of the tower down into the valley. The men were passing on with their banners, their flames, their scythes, and their greed ; they set fire to the huts, and threw bombs into the buildings, so that they split open with a crash. It is night, and the night seems endless. The old smithy blazes brightly and burns to the ground without much cracking, and in the midst of the fire the hammer hammers on.

Everything is ablaze. The rocks stand in a glare of flame. A vast quantity of smoke darkens the sky. Mad folk rush hither and thither in the valley, raising their voices in shouts of triumph. The hot air quivers and sets the bells ringing softly. Clouds of smoke and crackling sparks come in at the window. I rush down into the protecting church. There is a ruddy halo round the figures of the saints, and in my fearful anxiety I kneel down before the picture of Mary with the child Jesus. Ordinarily the child in the picture smiles at me, and seems to advance towards me with its cross . . . but to-day the little Saviour starts as if in fear, and turns away from me, who have given an innocent Christian child into the hands of one of the men who crucified Him. : . .

Then the bells ring out, morning roses glow in the windows, the church door opens wide, and a wedding procession enters to the strains of joyful

music. All the congregation is there, and the wedding-favours on their dresses shed sparks like glowing iron. Rolf is dressed in a robe of sunshine, and Otilie floats beside her bridegroom Joseph like a fair white cloud. Black angels with bats' wings are holding two silver bowls containing two golden rings, to bind the couple with such chains. Dance, dance, you angels all, you merry guests, you altar lights and you crucifix before the tabernacle ! Earth falls from the arches, and there is a cracking in the depths. All the dead who came from the mines on trollies drive in at the gate on trollies in long rows, and they join us in the dance. The stones beneath our feet burst, the walls crack and sway, flames rise from the rents in the floor, and the jaws of the fiery deep are opened wide. Otilie clutches my arm as I fall. "I followed the stranger, and you must follow me," and she pulls me down with her. A woman sits in an open coffin ; she reproaches me and asks for the children that she entrusted to my care. From another coffin Kimpel the blacksmith is calling—"Is this the watch you have kept, O shepherd of souls at St Mary's, that they are undermining the foundations of our church. There, on a fiery plain, a merry couple dance—the Master and Madame Gortschakoff. Old Herr von Yark is chased by grim hell-hounds, and rides over quivering human limbs, while heads that have no

bodies groan aloud, "Lost! lost!" Crooked Christl is raking the fire with a three-pronged fork. Hoisel says entreatingly, "I have confessed!" and Peter Heissel moans, "I won't do it again!" Kornstock cowers apart, beside his sinking monument; he strums and rattles with his bones and sings, "I am a Mighty Gentleman. When are they going to shout for joy again in the Torwald?" "In another hundred years," laughs the old woman from the Gral farm, as she rolls down below. All down, down, down, altar, font, pulpit, bells, all down into the bottomless abyss, down to the darkness of eternity. . . .

Bishop, are you still there? Have you no light? I must tell you, sir, that the church of St Mary's in the Torwald has sunk—the church and its congregation, living and dead. Smoke rises from the depths, and a small white bird rises from below. I see a man carrying a hanging lamp. I cannot see who it is. The light soars upwards like a red star. I follow it in fear—up, up into the wilderness, into the mountains with the northern light.

"Is it Rolf?" I called after him. "Rolf, it is dark. I have lost my way, show your light."

"Is it you, Father? Are you not going to church?"

"No, Rolf, the church has gone down."

"But God lives. Come, Wolfgang, let us go to Him."

"And the others, Rolf?—what of the others?"

Here ends the diary of the priest of St Mary's in the Torwald.

The last pages, written on notepaper, were most probably penned about the end of October. A strange alteration had already been noticeable in the priest before that date. In September he suddenly interrupted his Sunday sermon by exclaiming—"Of what use are my entreaties: those who are concerned are not present." Then he was often bewildered and distracted during Mass, stopped in the midst of the sacred function, turned round, gazed at the walls and listened. He always thought he heard hammering. On the first Sunday in October, when he was holding the chalice in his hand, he came down the altar-steps with it and whispered to the vergers to tell the people to go out as quickly as they could, for Simon had already finished. After that he did not go up to church again. Otherwise there was nothing very strange about him, only he spoke of being ill, and said that he would soon go into the hospital. He looked pale and weary.

Herr von Yark interested himself in him at once, and tried to induce him to consult a doctor. His answer was that he had too many complaints.

Soon afterwards he disappeared. He had left the rectory, and had been seen in the fields at Unterschuttbach near the railway, and at the place where the old master's house had stood, and finally on the slopes of Oberschuttbach. He walked slowly with the help of his stick, gazing on the ground, into the bushes and into the water, as if he were seeking something. If people saluted or addressed him, he looked up with a startled air, gave no answer and went on. In the night he was seen in the forest higher up, threading his way with the help of a lantern amid the tree-trunks. Herr von Yark sent people to search for him, but they did not find him, only sometimes they saw the lantern twinkling starlike in the distance. But a man who was seeking for herbs met him, and he asked him whether he had not seen souls, for he was seeking lost souls.

And one morning he was found on the Griesalm. When the shepherd Rolf rose early in the morning and went over to the spring before daylight, he saw a light under the pines. A lantern was standing on the ground, and on a stone beside it sat the priest. Both hands were supported on his stick, and his chin was resting on his hands, his broad hat covered his face, and he sat there as if he had just fallen into a doze. The shepherd thought, "So he has come again," he did not wish to disturb him, and quietly drew his water. When

the sun rose gradually above the world of Alps, and the priest remained sitting and slumbering, while a squirrel came down from the tree and ran over the shoulders of the sleeping man as it would over a tree-trunk, then Rolf began to grow anxious. He went up to him and saw that Pastor Wolfgang was dead.

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At St Mary's, on the right of the churchyard gate, is the grave of the man who died of a broken heart at the sight of a doomed world. A cross of stone has been erected, and at its foot is carved a hanging lamp, the symbol of true priesthood, and beneath it are the words: "Love is the Light Eternal!"

